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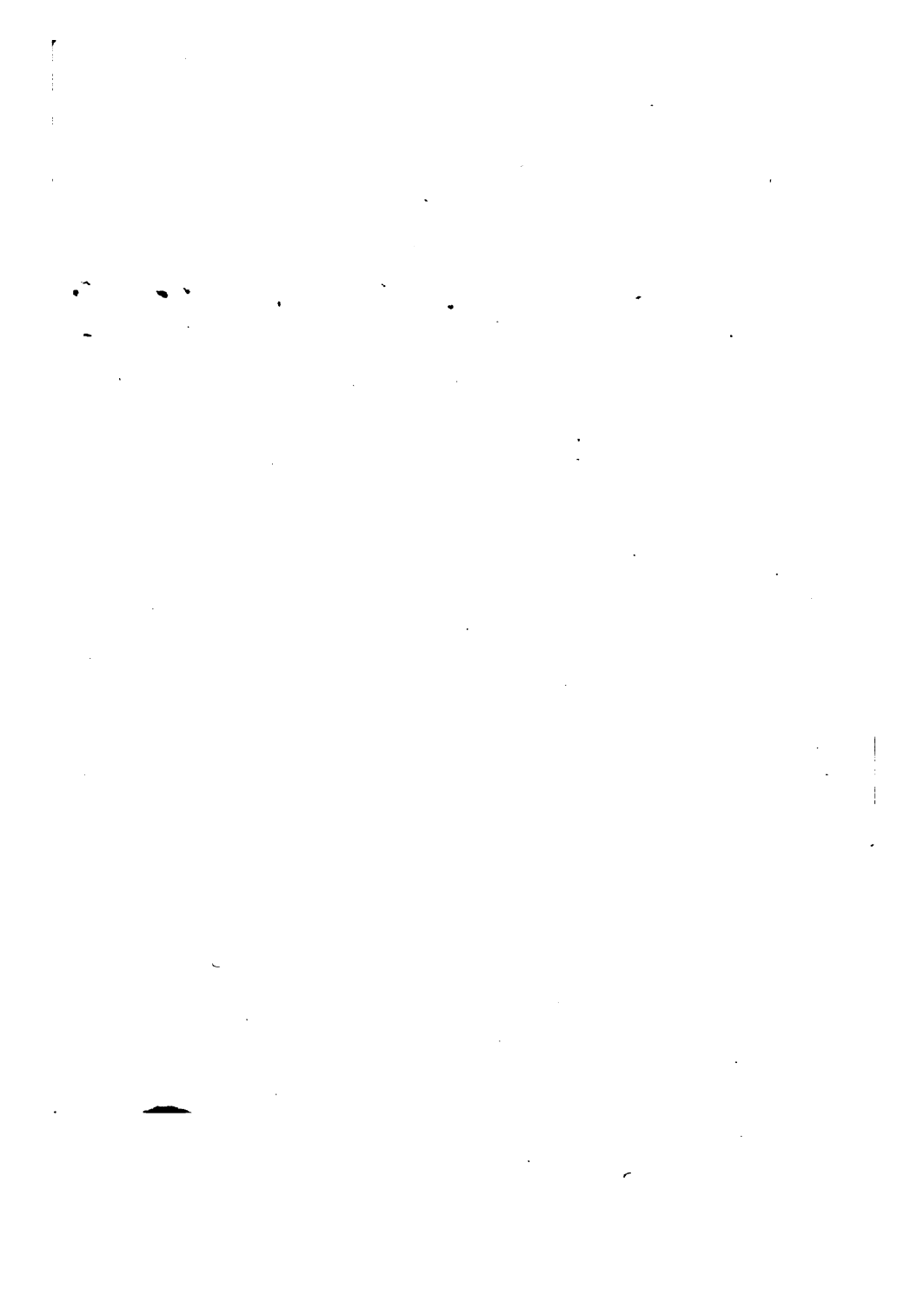
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1. No subject

NBI
Parker



To A. O. and Augusta T. Morris
from
John M. Morris Dec 25. 75



Yours Sincerely
Wm' S Parker

AFTER NOONTIDE

A Volume of Verse
in Various Keys

By
BENJAMIN S. PARKER

AUTHOR OF "THE CABIN IN THE CLEARING," "HOOSIER BARDS," ETC.

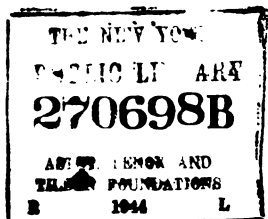
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
EVALEEN STEIN AND E. E. EDWARDS



NICHOLSON PRINTING & MFG. COMPANY
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1905

E. E.



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A Creed may be a lifeless shell,
The mummy of an ancient truth;
But love is more than miracle
And mercy hath eternal youth.

Book-a-give 21 Feb. 1944

THIS LITTLE VOLUME
is Lovingly Dedicated
TO THE FRIENDS
WHOSE GENEROUS SUPPORT
HAS MADE ITS
PUBLICATION POSSIBLE

B. S. P.

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AFTER NOONTIDE

AND OTHER POEMS

AFTER NOONTIDE

AFTER NOONTIDE

THE morning is over, the noon has flamed by,
And the shadows are reaching far into the east,
And the sun in his glory descends from on high,
Like Zeus from some famous Olympian feast;
The man waxeth old and the memory fails,
The eye loses lustre, the step is less free;
A breath of the evening about him prevails
With murmurs of rest in a slumber-song's key;

And, now, shall the old man recoil on himself,
Forgetting life's haloes, neglecting his kind,
Hug his poverty close, or gloat over his pelf
Till his sympathies die in a petrified mind?
Or shall he toil on and find solace in cares
That keep his heart warm and give life to his
thought;
Or narrow his view to the petty affairs
Of a fun'ral parade as the last honors sought?

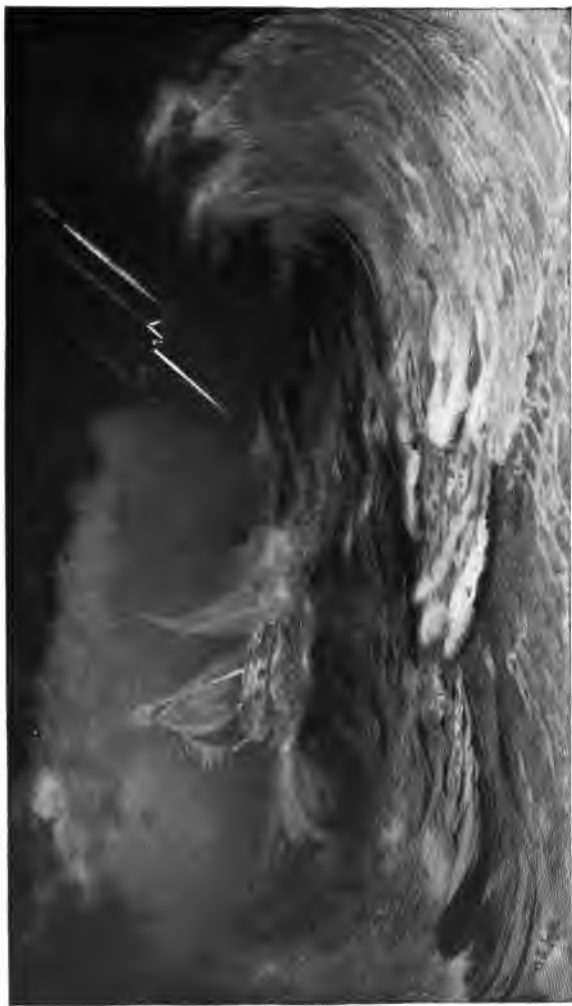
'T were better, me seems, to fall dead at the plow,
The sun's latest ray shining full in one's face,
The soft breeze of evening caressing the brow,
With peace after battle and, after toil, grace,

Than fade into idleness droning the way
To beatitudes sought through a jumble of creeds.
'T were sweet to depart at the close of the day
In rapture of soul or in glory of deeds!

I count that our joys when the shadows grow long
In life's afternoon on ourselves must depend
Far more than when morning awakes us with song,
When love wins a lover and friendship a friend;
For age that knows only far gleams from the past
Is lonely and sad in a world that is cold,
Since love's benedictions forever are cast
On souls that stay young howe'er bodies grow old.

God gives us the morning for pleasure, growth, gain,
The evening for final maturity's dower,—
The ultimate sweet'ning of heart and of brain,
As fruits that mature in the Autumn's last hour,—
Men wither too often before they are ripe,
Grow weary of failures and yield to despair,
Abandon the plow or break Pan's tuneful pipe,
And sit with bowed heads in the sweet evening air.

Whatever one loses, whatever he wins
In the battles he wages to be and become,
Now breaking the threads that adversity spins,
Now broken himself by misfortune's hard sum,
When evening arrives let him hold up his head
With brow made serene by the peace in his breast,
At one with his God, by love's urgency led,
Go into the twilight and pass to his rest.



Per kindness of the Century Company

"TEMPEST TOST AND TEMPEST DRIVEN."

*VANDERDECKEN

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

THERE, beyond the Cape of Storms,
Where the breaker's voice of thunder
Roars when ships are rent asunder,
Through a fog of ghostly forms,—

Writhing furies, flying far,
Tempest-tossed and tempest-driven,
Mist of sea and light of heaven
Mingled in eternal war,—

Sailing always without gain,
Leagues on leagues, as sailors reckon,
Flies the undying Vanderdecken,
Toiling, powerless to attain.

There the winds his course reverse—
Vain is sea-craft to befriend him;
Heaven has not a breath to lend him
To escape its haunting curse.

Back he speeds o'er India's brine,
Till, on lazy sampans lying,
Asians laugh to see him flying
On their far horizon's line.

*By permission of *The Century Magazine*.

When on deck and frozen shroud
Loud the driven hailstones rattle
Like quick musketry in battle,—
Cloud that vanishes in cloud,—

Men catch glimpses of the sail,
Ages old, and rent and hoary,
Of that quaint old ship of story,
And cry, "Vanderdecken, hail!"

When the austral tempests rave,
And the sea-god's mighty sledges
Pound the ragged rocks and ledges,
Safe he rides the crested wave.

Vainly waits the hidden reef:
Born by Odin, the undaunted,
Over boiling seas enchanted,
Ever sails this man of grief.

Swifter than the swallow's flight
Down the arching seas he plunges,
Where th' antarctic fog expunges
All things from the chart of sight.

Oft the shipwrecked sailor hears,
Through dense fogs, the old blasphemer,
Like some wierd, delirious dreamer,
Thundering orders down the years;

Or discerns a ship go by,
From his failing vision speeding,
Whence this answer greets his pleading:
"Help thou need'st not; thou canst die!"

Mocking Vanderdecken's rage,
Maelstroms yawn and seas roar after—
Tempests, with discordant laughter,
Hurl him on from age to age.

Heaven has ta'en him at his word,
And his hope and his ambition,
Failing always of fruition,
Make the curse his curse incurred.

* * *

THUS this legend, quaint and old,
Sailor-wrought and bard-repeated,
Of the deathless, the defeated,
In defeat still over-bold,

Teaches how the sick soul flies,
By its errors spurred and jaded,
Even when lust and greed have faded
With ambition's painted lies.

IN AN OLD GARDEN

IN this old garden let me stray and dream
Where sweet marjoram, sage and mint and balm
With lips of fragrance whisper life's supreme
Insistent story through the brooding calm,—

The tale of love and love's Arcadian song,—
Still chanted low among the blooming stocks
Our mothers cherished, or amid this throng
Of piebald pinks and crimson hollyhocks.

Let strife and care beyond the latticed gate
Wait with the daily dole of life and death,
And all the great affairs of church and state,
The warrior's rage, the things the wise man saith.

The hour and place are sacred to the past,
The droning bees are laden with old sweets,
And these lithe shadows that the grapevines cast
Are unsubstantial as a boy's conceits.

Down these wide walks a hundred phantoms glide,
And airy spirits idle on the wings
Of wanton hopes that other years denied,—
Dear tell-tale wraiths of long-forgotten things.

Tansy and pennyroyal, chamomile,
And "live-forever" and the mournful rue,
Each in its place, recalls a mother's smile
And many cordials that her skill could brew

For the sick body or the stricken mind,
Till I can feel her hand upon my brow
With cooling touch, intent thereon to bind
Some soothing herb whose fragrance haunts me
now.

This old, bent apple tree beside the wall
Bears still upon its gnarled and lichened limbs
Such apples as lost paradise recall
In this dear paradise of matin hymns

Sung by waked bird and hummed by risen bee,
Where three score years ago the children found,—
First joys of motherhood to bird and tree,—
Some unfledged wings, a gladness green and round.

Here, where its blossoms fell in rosy showers,
In the sweet dapples of its swaying shade
O! happy, happy were the tardy hours
That seemed to wait for rustic boy and maid.

Heart answered heart, entangled in love's snare,
That care and doubt and dull ambition's scorn
Estranged thereafter, breaking in despair
The fragile buds of life's unsullied morn.

A vision rises from yon tangled mass
Of berry bushes, and I see the stain
Of lush ripe fruits on lips of lad and lass,
Or paint therewith our castles in old Spain:

Though Spain and Castle were but idle words
To us, whose lives were by that present bound,
Glad with the gladness of the fields and herds,
Content as sparrows building near the ground.

And things were born within this ancient pale
That were to life as melody to tune,
And memory clings forever to the tale
Of some fair promise broken all too soon,

Some sweet, frail lassie smiling in her flight
Across the boundaries of our little years,
As love's dear star, that lost in morning light,
Leaves its far worshippers in ignorant tears.

Some lusty lad with sinews tense as steel
And heart as tender as a mother's, yet
Strong, e'en when pulsing, for his country's weal,
His life blood out where serried armies met

With valor matching equal valor. Here
Once more the sorrowing elder women talk
Of their dead heroes and with many a tear
Bedew these quaint old blossoms by the walk.

And so the long hour fades, the shadows glide
East, ever east, till, with a sudden gleam,
The sun goes down, the silhouettes pass, the pride
Of this old garden sinks into my dream.

TWO BROTHERS OF ONE HOUSE

TWO brothers, born upon the same demain,
Had outward likeness, but their souls were far,
Each from the other, as the greed of gain
Is from the gladness of the morning star.

One bowed himself to earth and sought its sands
Of yellow metal, and, from rock and field
Clawed out its wealth with eager, beastly hands
And groveled, gloating o'er the princely yield.

The other stood a-tiptoe on the heights
And saw the seas, the continents and space
All palpitant with far celestial lights,
And read God's promise in the human face.

The first ran through the market with the scent
Of hounds in hunt, for victims, that his arts
Might turn their blood to money as he went,
And gleaned new thousands from the wreck of
hearts.

The second scattered blessings by his way
And shared his little with the neediest hind,
Laughed with the happy children at their play,
Thanked God for love and magnified his kind,

Sang in the clouds, or by his daily path
Saw worlds develop in the sprouting grass,
And heaven in all, despite the puny wrath
Of little tyrants, raging as they pass.

The first grew rich and prospered and knew less
That wise men know, growing leaner, hour by hour,
Until he saw, self gratified, distress
And sorrow multiply beneath his power.

Men fawned upon him most when most their hate
Grew venomous within their stifled souls,
And while he schemed and groveled death and fate
Wrote his just sentence on their fadeless scrolls.

They thrust him in the ground and reared a shaft
That spoke of virtues which to him were lies,
Then turned aside and in derision laughed,
Saying "naught is naught when most it multiplies."

But when the second brother came he wept
"Alas, my brother! he knew more than I
The value of a trifle and he kept
His trifle guarded, while I sought the sky

"And light and law, from nebulae to man,
And Mercy's guerdons, gentleness and peace;
How grief may turn to joy, hate, under ban,
May fade forever into love's increase."

"He won his quest, men saw and praised his gain,
Even while they cursed him; but alas, for me!
Not even curses blunt the haunting pain
Of one who toils for others thanklessly."

Mistaken Soul! God also called him soon.
No lettered stone belies his generous breast,
But grass and mint with summer bloom and tune
And gladness gather where his ashes rest.

Swart children join the chorus echoing there.
And men speak of him as an absent friend,
While his freed Spirit, sweet as light and air,
Grows and shall grow, a joy that may not end.

The poor, first brother men no longer hate.
Love for the second now his dust endears.
His sordid failure, irony of fate,
No more misnamed success, provoketh tears

Of pitying grief from youth's indulgent eyes
That often dance with joy above the page
Whereon a fragment of the second lies,
The gift of genius to a doubting age.

THE RAPTURE

SOMETIMES the rapture of a song
No mortal ever sings
Has trembled Life's frail chords among
And stirred the finer strings

Till, for the moment, I have known
A sweet and far delight,—
The joy of Love's diviner tone,
Low-murmured through the night;

And yet, so faintly fell the sound
Upon the spirit's ear,
And seemed so free from vocal bound,
So rounded like a sphere,

So near and yet so far away,
So indistinct yet plain,
So like a gladness of the day,
Or peace that follows pain,

So ready to break forth in words,
So quick, when thought essayed
To capture it, among the chords,
To fail and faint and fade,

No power had I to catch, or hold
The rare, elusive thing,
And when, in daring overbold,
I thought its joy to sing,

It fled me wholly and defied
All arts of speech or pen;
But when, both self and art denied,
I sought for it again,

And knew that I could only hear,
But never might repeat
The raptured tone, it sounded near
And more intensely sweet.

A low and loving minstrelsy,
To soothe the sorrowing soul,
The motive of its melody
Surpasses man's control.

He who would hear its tones must bind
Ambition's daring wing,
And list, with free and open mind,
The song he may not sing.

THE MAN AND THE DESERT

A YOUNG man stood on the border land
Of the zone of shifting sands and wind,
Hailed the desert with beckoning hand
And its problems scanned with eager mind.

But—scorner of life and friend of death—
The desert stood, faithless, vast and lone;
Men shrank and shriveled in her hot breath
And Thirst was lord of her burning zone.

She laughed at the slow-paced caravans,
The awkward camels and precious freight,
Their Arab masters, with futile plans
For defying Nature and conq'ring fate.

"I am the desert!" she cried, "and I
Am mistress of sand and sun and wind;
The bold invader who dares deny
My power and prestige—weak, foolish, blind—

"Falls on my pitiless breast to sleep
And wakes no more, for the roving sands
Sweep down and bury him fathoms deep
With all the work of his puny hands.

"Yet, I am the desert of many moods;
I doom the hundreds and save the scores,
Oft bearing caravans, Arabs, goods,
Safe to the opulent merchants' doors.

"My children coax me; I serve their greed;
They glory in me, and I in them;
But thou, fair stripling, I warn thee, speed
Back to the green world beyond my hem!"

The stripling smiled at the Desert's wrath,
But gave no answer to threat or taunt,
For he knew the power of her deadly scath
And durst not tempt it with idle vaunt.

A vantage ground on the weary way
To the Desert's heart the young man sought
And found, through patience, then, day by day,
With steadfast faith, at his purpose wrought.

Deep into the sands, through clay and shale,
His engines drove the exploring drill;
The Desert's furnace, the sandstorm's hail,
Were vain to conquer his conq'ring will.

The engines throbbed and the drill went down,
The laden camels went snarling by;
Each turbaned rider, with nod and frown,
Guessed and pondered and marveled why?

The engines pulsed and the drill sank deep
 Into the earth's crust, hard and old,
Till down where the primal fossils sleep
 It plunged in a fountain clear and cold.

The steam pumps throbbed and the waters flowed
 Till the floods appeased the thirsty sands,
And the great sheiks, worn from the desert road,
 Praised Allah's name, with uplifted hands.

The moss filmed over the moistened stone,
 And palms upsprouted and grasses grew,
Verdure leaped into the desert's zone
 And joy was born on the sands anew.

Then came more engines and drills and wells,
 And further and further the waters sped
Into the desert with miracles
 Of bloom and fruitage, and overhead

The green boughs sheltered rejoicing birds
 And cast cool shadows where children strayed;
Men builded homes, reared flocks and herds
 Where Mirage once her sorceries played.

* * * * *

The strong, gray man—no stripling now—
 Smiles on the accomplished work and saith,
"The winning is well, though small, but how
 Wide still remaineth the realm of death,

"Its torturing thirst, its murd'rous sands,
Its red simooms and its parching heat!
The desert still laughs at my toil-worn hands;
But to gain is vict'ry, to lose defeat.

"The desert has lost, the gain is man's,
And man shall add to what man has done,
With saner efforts and wiser plans,
Till the blight be conquered, the blessing won."

* * * * *

Well, deserts and dearths and flinty crusts
In this strange world are but common things.
Hard knocks are needed and skillful thrusts
To break them up and release the springs

Of living waters that wait below
To revive waste sand and withered heart;
To banish the desert's reign of woe,
And raptures of life and love impart.

So the man must smite the desert's face
And battle with her, as one to ten;
But God hath given him dower of grace,
And he shall conquer through love of men.

LA RAQUETTE

SONG OF A CANADIAN SNOW SHOE CLUB

THE snow lies deep on hill and vale,
The cotter spins his hamely tale
Of Highland lairds and *buirdly* men—
“When ane was fu’ as guid as ten
Bold Englishmen who dared assail”,—
Beside his ingle blaze, or casts
The “roaring stones” despite the blasts
That whistle wildly by the rink
Where bonnie tapers flare and wink.
From yonder hill’s illumined crown,
On swift toboggans flashing down,
The English maids and Yankee boys
Go shouting their tumultuous joys,
Or glide and swing or dart and sway
In glittering *ronds a’ patiner*;
So come, my lads with tuques of blue,
Ye brave Canadians bold and true,
Your faces toward *Etoile du Nord*,
While tramping orders waiting for,
Nor long to wait, nor time to fret
When we go marching *en raquette*!

Hold high your torches all alight!
And let them flare into the night
And cast our silhouettes on the snow,
While merry *chansons* rise and flow,
Such as our brave forefathers sung
When first the mellow Norman tongue

Made musical the woodland deeps
Where land-locked Minas calmly sleeps;
For to such notes are movements set
When we go tramping *en raquette*.

The good wife plies the little wheel,
The grand dame's turning off the heel
Of Pierrot's sock; I see the light
Shine from the window through the night;
It twinkles like a *joli* star
To guide me where my dear ones are.
High over picket, over hedge,
Along the ravine's ragged edge,
We'll march and sing and sing and march
Through ranks of hemlock groves of larch,
Where pine trees moan and beeches fret,
As we go tramping *en raquette*.

The *demoiselle* has dreamy eyes
That hint of France and paradise;
The good priest wears a sable gown
And shaves with care his sacred crown;
The *habitant*, though bent and old,
Still snaps his fingers at the cold,
The brave old man can ne'er forget
The nights he tramped it *en raquette*.

The drifted snow obscures the roads,
The bob-sleds screech beneath their loads;
At touch of torches birch trees blaze
And light the forest's tangled ways,

The while we tramp, like marching men,
 Five miles and back, from seven to ten,
 And then a sip of something warm
 And jest and story lend their charm;
 But no *ivrogne* was ever yet
L' homme premier sur la raquette!

And now, ye Frenchmen, bold and free,
 On this, our winter's night of glee,
 Lift high your voices, let us raise
 A song in our great founder's praise,
 For no voice ever rose in vain
 That sang the glory of Champlain;
 Then let some tearful Strophe tell
 How great Montcalm the patriot fell,
 For still *Français*, as he was then,
 We're, first of all, *Canadienne!*
 To patriot airs our notes are set
 When we go tramping *en raquette!*

* * *

NOTES TO LA RAQUETTE

"Roaring Stones"—The Scotchmen in Canada play their National game, "Curling," in long rinks, built for the purpose, using heavy oval "curling irons" with smooth under surfaces like sadirons, in place of the original "roaring stones," used on the Scottish lakes and streams, but they still call curling the "roaring game."

Ronds à patiner—pronounced *Ron sau patina*—Skating rinks.

Etoile du Nord—pronounced *Atwal du Nor*—The North Star.

En Raquette—pronounced *ong racket*, accent heavy on the last syllable—On the Snow Shoe.

Pierrot—a boy's name—pronounced *Pero*.

Joli—pronounced *Zholee*—Pretty.

Habitant—Farmer, pioneer, inhabitant.

Ivrogne—pronounced *Evron*—Drunkard.

L' homme premier sur la raquette—The first man upon the Snow Shoe.

Francais—pronounced *fransa*—French.

Canadienne—pronounced *Canadien*, accent strong on last syllable.

A TALE OF A TERRAPIN

I.

AS a Terrapin was wandering in a garden long ago
With a dim appreciation of the blossoms there
ablow,
And a vaguer rumination of the wherefore, thus and
so,
All the world went rushing past him in a most dis-
tressing way,
Till, in fancy, he was racing with the chariot of the
day
And with busy snails and hop toads making up the
world's display.
Then his little eyes grew shiny with the thoughts that
filled his skull
As the kernel of the walnut fills its indurated hull:
"How could such a hurrying fellow be morose or slow
or dull?"
Was the question he propounded to his inner con-
sciousness,
But the answer that it made him was an echo of dis-
tress

Lest his nerves be wrecked and shattered by his frightful eagerness.

Then the old chelonian pondered on the functions of the brain

And the nerves that bear its orders, carrying news of joy or pain

To and from the farthest outworks of the corporal domain.

"Ah!" he mused, "there may be danger, as the wise physicians tell,

In the headlong pace I'm keeping in my ardor to excel:"

So he dropped his mental anchor and reefed sail within his shell.

While he rested 'neath the cover of a spreading pumpkin vine

Sleep, the soother, stole upon him, with its healing anodyne,

And the vine ran on and left him roasting in the summer shine.

When he wakened late, he started in his old, familiar way,

To o'ertake the shade, but swelt'ring in the sun's too ardent ray,

Sighed, "this fearful rush astounds me as it goes on night and day.

"Even vines have caught the mania and desert one on the road,

Soothing shades skip on before me like the swiftly hopping toad;

Oh, my nerves! I'll ease them, spare them! Rest is heaven and rush be blown!"

II.

Thus, my friend, old poets linger, growing idle, pacing
slow,
Dreaming they no more may mingle in the mighty on-
ward flow
Setting seaward like a river, beat by all the storms
that blow,
Toil and traffic, mad ambition, war that sweeps in aw-
ful wrath,
Lust of glory, zeal of learning, pleasure scorning that
she hath,
Swirl and rend and roar about us as we tread our
humble path!
Men, our brothers, crush each other, speeding to some
fancied goal,
Grim, old, child-devouring Chronos swallows now his
children whole,
Enterprise and push and hurry lash the body, goad the
soul.
Few may pause to hear our singing, though it voice
the loving heart,
Few may turn to note the pathos speaking through
our homely art;
Each must bear his marching burden and in battle do
his part,
And we, also, O, my my singer! friend of many happy
years,
Must, perforce, fall in or linger where the past its
phantom rears;
We must move with men of mettle or efface ourselves
with tears.

Not all vainly did the prophet mingle honor with gray
hairs,
But the man who shirketh labor swiftly his own
shroud prepares;
Idle hands of old men often sow the planted fields
with tares.
Wherefore, O, my friend! the poet still must sing and
seek and toil
Still must keep the pace of progress, still must burn
the midnight oil,
Or be counted but a cumb'rer of an erstwhile fruitful
soil.
Age brings grace to those who grace it with fair
words and gracious deeds,
Just as love comes to the lover, solace to the soul that
pleads,
Or God's blessing to the people who relieve each
other's needs.
Past ambition's phrensied cohorts crowding all the
battle plain,
Far beyond the greedy millions lie the fadeless fields
of grain,
And the soul that presses to'rds them reaps, at last,
their sheaves of gain.

III.

Let the nerveless turtle slumber, snugly hidden in his
shell,
While the vines and shadows pass him in life's moving
miracle;
He obeys his sluggish nature, and, obeying, doeth
well;

But for man the law is action, toil to be and to attain;
Even love, of all the master, sings forever this refrain,—

“Onward, upward, loved and lover, pulsing heart and
busy brain!

“Keep love’s currents pure and holy, sweeten every
fount of song;

Through all changes, evolutions, as the mighty ages
throng,

Still pursue the truth forever and outstrip the ancient
wrong.”

POVERTY FLAT

THERE’S a funeral today down at Poverty Flat,
And the corpse will be borne on a dray,
While the mourner-in-chief, with no crape on his hat,
Walks behind in the primitive way.
She was only a woman who toiled for her bread
And the bread of her six “little dears;”
He is but a day-laborer who walks with bowed head
In a sorrow too bitter for tears.

There’s small comfort today down at Poverty Flat
For the six orphaned children to share,—
Only one little hymn by a sister and that
Only followed by one broken prayer;
By one broken prayer from a mother as poor
As the mother they bear to the tomb,
A petition for “help still to toil and endure”
And His presence to shine through the gloom.

O! poor are the dwellers in Poverty Flat;
And so tired are the mothers that death
Comes in like a friend when their strength to combat
Life's evils wears out with the breath,
Then other tired mothers will add to their own
The burdens the dead one has left;
Though rags flutter there and few comforts are
known,
No orphan is wholly bereft.

There's small chance for the lad reared in Poverty
Flat;
If in reverence for *tuum* he fail,
The shrift is a short one through court, and all that,
To State's prison bound from the jail.
But they think very fast in old Poverty's row,
When they see the rich villain flaunt by,
Whose freedom compels e'en the dullest to know
That justice can wink a blind eye.

There is woe for the maiden in Poverty Flat,
If there be not some angel to guard;
Her's the ill-concealed shame and the fatherless brat,
Or to mate with some rough, tipsy lord,
While Society's gilded but rotten old ship,
To the guards with her sins laden down,
Glides over her sorrows and leaves her to slip
Into still fouler waters and drown.

The stars shall shine down on old Poverty Flat
And the fruit-giving rains shall descend,

But life will be bitter and hearts will thereat
Grow hard even to'rds the one Friend
Who forsakes not and sleeps not, till men will declare
That nowhere on the earth could you meet
With heathens whose heathenish ways could compare
With the sins on old Poverty's street,

Go down with your tracts to old Poverty Flat,
Make a mission of it, if you must,
Then go to your churches and pass round the hat,
But the best thing would be to be just.—
Be just in your dealings with Poverty Flat,
Be just in the wages you pay,
Be generous and kind, still remembering that
There are hearts there that bleed every day.

O, Poverty Flat, poor old Poverty Flat!
Thy "innings" have never been sung;
But some Laz'rus of thine may yet bring his torn hat
Full of water to cool the parched tongue
Of the proud, guilty world that has mocked at thy
grief,
Nor paused to give ease to thy pain;
For the old, coward world has a craven's belief
That nothing is sacred but gain.

THE BEECH TREE

MOTTLED trunk and shining leaves,
Mossy limb and lichen'd bark,
Where light's flying shuttle weaves
Golden threads in warp of dark,
Still the pleasant beech tree stands,
Like a gentle, genial host
Welcoming with gracious hands
Bird or squirrel, man or ghost.

In the brown and fatty mold,
Where the tree's great roots divide,
Like a dead thing, as of old,
Doth the leafless beechdrop bide,
Curious child of woodsy gloom,
Soaked so full of Sylvan shade
That from stem and warty bloom
Long the settler's ink was made.

Give me fancy's magic power,
Eyes to see and ears to hear,
And the beech tree's spreading bower
Holds a world within its sphere.
There I love to lie and dream,
As the summer day goes by,
Catching glint and passing gleam,
Glance of wing and blue of sky,



E. E. Edwards

“This benevolent old beech, lithe of limb and rough of bark,
Hath a bounty large for each citizen in plume or fur.”

Ghosts of red men, shades of deer,
Wildwood folk of claw or wing,
That once wooed or wrangled here,—
Wolves that wail and birds that sing,
Paroquet and porcupine,
Lordly turkey, piping quail,
Through a maze of shrub and vine
Pass, as dreams on dreams prevail.

Then on sense and soul there falls
Softly, through the whisp'ring leaves,
Low, ecstatic bugle calls,
Such as on the golden eves
Of the lover's long ago
Nymph or fairy bugler blew
In the sunset's after glow
When the pallid moon was new,

While light kirtles, pink and green,
Eddy over twinkling feet,
As in mists of shade and sheen
Elfin lords and ladies meet,
Dancing to the lilting rhyme
Of the wind harp's myriad strings
Deftly touched in tune and time
To love's softest whisperings.

Or, when sprightly summer rains
Patter on its emerald tent,
Running down in silvery skeins,
Laughing in their merriment,

Till the birds have silent grown,
And the swollen runlets roll,
Then 'tis joy to stand alone
By the beech tree's mighty bole,

Silent as the silent things
Hidden near me, till the sun
Smiles again and robin sings
"Hallelujah, it is done!"
Then when all the woodland wakes
And renews its sylvan joys,
The delirious rapture makes
My old heart leap like a boy's.

This benevolent, old beech,
Lithe of limb and rough of burr,
Shares its bounty large, with each
Citizen in plume or fur;
But, when Autumn frosts prevail,
Barefoot boys, sun-painted brown,
Its full arms with clubs assail
Till the ripe nuts rattle down.

Oily kernels, plump and sweet,—
Bounty of the primal wood,
Chipmunk's treasure, squirrel's meat,
Pigeon's rapture, grouse's food,—
Such the beech tree's annual gifts
To its friends from near or far:
Palsied be the arm that lifts
Axe or saw its life to mar!

Once we twined its slender sprays
Each with each, down-trailing low,—
Country boys have cunning ways
Wiser people do not know,—
And, thus, baby's hammock made,
Sang, and swung him rock-a-by,
And thereafter boy and maid
Each went swinging low and high.

Dear to me the storied beech
With its much-initialed bark;
Oh, the sermons it might preach,
Oh, the mysteries vague and dark
It might solve had we but ears
Quick to catch its whisperings.
Oh, the rapture and the tears
Over long forgotten things

That its old familiar form
Brings me as I stand at gaze,
Dreaming still through sun or storm
As I dreamed in other days!
Tempest scarred and drought assailed,
Bravely has the valiant tree,
Over wind and fire prevailed,
Saved to bird and beast and—me.

THE TUBE ROSE

THE Tube Rose is stainless, white,
And yieldeth a sweet perfume
That filleth the morning light
And sanctifieth the gloom
That falls with the falling night
On the old house, room by room.

The Tube Rose is tall and straight
On its stem, and holds its head
Like a soul, with love elate,
Uprisen above the dead;
And thus doth it keep its state
Till its little day has fled.

Then its head bows with the seed
Of fragrance and joy to come,
And, as doth the wither'd weed,
It sinks, with its garnered sum
Of the season's hope and deed,
In the brown alluvium.

O, sweetly the Tube Rose dowers
With fragrance our waiting souls
And, purer than eve's dew-showers,
Its aroma o'er us rolls,
Till the incense of its flowers
Each wandering heart consoles.

Be thou as the Tube Rose, dear,
Pure as the crystalline snow,
Yet warmer than mercy's tear
And sweeter than morn's first glow
In the springtime of the year
When the sap begins to flow!

Be thou as the Tube Rose when
It lifteth, above the mold,
Its head to the gaze of men,
By its innocence made bold,
And thy soul's redolence then
Shall thy lover's soul enfold.

TIMES AND SEASONS

THE HAUNTED ROAD

A HUNDRED tints adorn the maple tree,
A hundred splendors glorify the oak;
But winds that wail and wander, wantonly
Rush in and rend the autumn's gorgeous cloak,
And strew the fragments on the haunted way
Where youth and love made summer holiday.

The road is haunted, when the frosts assail
And brown November strides across the fields,
And light and sunshine may no more avail
To fright the shadows, with their shining shields,
Emboldened then by every wind that grieves
The misty ghosts come with the falling leaves.

I know not why long-vanished forms return
When red leaves fall and grass is brown and sere;
I know not why the soul should doubly yearn
For old companionships as fades the year,
Or memory call the dead from their abode
To walk again the old long-haunted road.

The road is haunted, that is all I know,
And every little, yellow butterfly
That comes to give its dust a summer glow

Recalls some joy of happy days gone by,
Some rapture of a radiant afternoon,
When love went dallying with the heart of June.

Chrysanthemums still glow upon the hill,
And camphor flowers defy the blighting frost;
Though many omens warn of coming ill,
And brown nuts fall when forest arms are toss't,
Yet, with the brave autumnal flowers, the soul
Still holds aloft dead summer's aureole,

And dreams again upon the haunted road
Such dreams as mortal tongue may not repeat—
Such dreams as only are by love bestowed
When hearts are young and summer days are sweet,
And, near or far, the mellow mists arise
And all things masquerade in strange disguise.

The road is haunted; spirits come and go
And some are glad and some are mourning shades
Draped in the sable weeds of mortal woe,
So sad their sadness all the air pervades:
These mourn, not now, some long-forgotten crime,
But that death came to them before their time.

They had but tasted life and found it good,
Its sour and bitters they had never known—
The keen-edged anguish of ingratitude,
The loss of love, the grief that maketh moan,
Nor jealousy's foul breath, nor hatred's curse
Nor pride that taunts you with your empty purse.

Untaught of these, they weep, and we with them
Because their mortal joys were all too brief:
"Could they have lived," we sigh, "what ray, what gem
Of heavenly light, what marvel, past belief,
Of truth divine, each might have won for men
To link the rebel world to heaven again!"

The road is haunted, 'wild'ring spirits glide,
Timing our footsteps, or pass on before;
Some with sweet laughter, others sorrow-eyed,
And some that croon forgotten love songs o'er;
The road is haunted and the world a dream
When autumn's embers in the ashes gleam.

LOSS AND GAIN.

NOW the splendid apparition
Of the opening joy of spring—
In the sprouting grass a vision
And a transport on the wing
Of the dear, familiar singer
Flashing by the window wide—
Comes and goes, but may not linger,
Backward, bashful, mystified.

Many a time the wanton wooing
Of the fickle April sun
Is some trustful life's undoing
Ere the boreal thrall is done;

Bee and beetle, leaf and blossom,
Hastening to the tender call,
Blighted, dying on the bosom
Of the frozen fallow fall.

But all pouting moods and crosses
Ravages of frosts that come,
We shall count but trivial losses
From the season's ample sum,
When the orchards bloom in billows
Pink and white, and kildeers call,
Where, by marshy brooks, the willows
Let their hairy catkins fall.

O the doubt, the fear, the longing
Of the slow, deceptive days,
Ere the tides of song come thronging
Down the greening forest ways,
Or upon the wistful vision
Spring's unfolding gladness flows
Till the fitful apparition
To the perfect presence grows!

Aye! but never soul nor season
Reaches its victorious day,
But, for some mysterious reason,
Storms have beaten round its way;
Laggard frosts and early sorrows,
Loss of gracious, grateful things,
Preface all the great tomorrows
And the joys of happy springs.

OCTOBER

MONTH of the later harvests, hail!
We give thee happy greeting,
While yet thy softer moods prevail
And all thy frowns are fleeting,
For still thy fragrant breezes woo
The soul from care and sorrow
And gentle dews thy joys renew,
Though frosts may blight tomorrow.

Achievement crowns thy dreamy days
And consummation beareth
Her largess down thy sylvan ways
Where peace with plenty fareth;
An art, whose secret no man knows,
Is tinting leaves and grasses
And weaving out of life's dull prose
A hymn that song surpasses.

And though the laugh of folly fails;
The shouts of children calling,
The Bob White's whistling on the rails,
The noise of ripe nuts falling
Recall old mem'ries love held dear
Through nights of storm and danger,
When hearts sank low with doubt and fear
And hope had grown a stranger.

The sounds of combat are less loud,
And discord's echoes fainter;
The forest, like a sunset cloud,
Reveals the peerless painter
Where, tint with tint, Apollo's skill
Compounds the rays auroral
To write on wooded vale and hill
The season's tale, post floral.

And yet the rustle of dry leaves,
The soft wind's minor measures,
Are each a rune that sorrow weaves
For summer's passing pleasures,
To make the sybil soul aware
That mating days are over,
And nature, with maternal care,
Maturing grain and lover,

Enrobes our northern world again
In rich Pomonian splendor;
Yields sweeter fruits and riper men
Than greener seasons render;
And so our song and bloom depart
With such a gentle sadness
We hail October's sunny art
With more than vernal gladness.

And though the loved and lost return
While autumn winds are sighing,
And walk beside us down the burn
Where wither'd leaves are flying,

We scarcely know that they have died,
As hand-in-hand together
We wander on soul-satisfied
Through this October weather.

Our past and present strangely blend
In mists of red and yellow,
The was, and is, the lover, friend,
Crisp youth and age grown mellow;
All, all are here, and none are lost,
And all are tinged with glory,
The handiwork of sun and frost
That ends the summer's story.

SWEET WILLIAMS AND SWEET VIOLETS

O GLAD reminders of the past!
I greet in each dear smiling face,
Some joy too crisply sweet to last,
Some fleeting, but remembered grace,

Till, once again a child, I hail
Your presence at the wildwood's side,
Your lights where thorns and brush prevail
And last year's cast-off leaves abide.

When sun and shadow alternate
On warm south slopes where meadows yield
To tangled woods, you congregate
And slyly, sweetly push afield.

Sweet williams!—sweeter for your name,
I catch your fragrance even in thought,
And feel again the sudden flame
Of some boy love that came to naught.

O wistfully her eye of blue,
The modest violet opens wide
To see the earth her life renew
As some waked spirit glorified,

And lo! young Iris loiters by,
And she, low, hidden in the grass,
Perceives and loves the wanton sly
And mirrors him, as in a glass,

Till May's fair children all behold
The rainbow's truest tints renewed—
The blue, the violet, the gold—
In this wee flower by Iris woo'd.

Sweet williams, blessings on your frail
And fragrant heads! In you I greet
My mother's spirit; you exhale
Some blessing old, some quaint conceit,

The subtle sense of unseen things
My mother used to feel and know,
When first the moth spread silken wings
And May flowers blossomed long ago.

Sweet williams and sweet violets
Were consolation after tears;
Their fragrance banished life's regrets
And soothed the anguish of her years.

How oft, a wistful boy, I stood
And watched the rapture of her face,
When these meek children of the wood
Bestowed on her their joy and grace!

And so of all the flowers of spring
I prize them most, and hold most dear
The days when robins build and sing
And wild sweet williams first appear.

MORNING AND EVENING

(A SONG OF THE AFTERNOON)

I SING not now as I have sung
In many a former day,
When skies were fair and hearts were young
And evening far away.

But still to me the morning's song
Repeats its vernal joy,
And happy faces round me throng
As when I was a boy.

The song sings in the longing soul,
But falls not on the ear;
Each sainted face, at thoughts control,
Through many a vanished year,

And past the graveyard's doubt and gloom,
Comes smiling into view,
And youth is sweet with morning bloom
And love is lord anew.

And so the heart again beats high,
The rapture and the gleam
Hang misty splendors in the sky
And glorify the stream.

Thus I re-live the olden days
And join them to the new,
And joys of youth, down sylvan ways,
With present hope pursue.

Say not, "'Tis but an idle dream,
A foolish siren's song!"
I know the wood, I know the stream,
I know the childish throng.

I hear the manifold, sweet sounds
Of echo-murmured joys,
And tread the old, familiar rounds
With winsome girls and boys.

And though I know the grasses grow,
Through changing sun and shade,
Where these I loved so long ago
By tender hands were laid,

Their past is mine, as mine was theirs,
And mine the cherished thought
That all our pleasures, hopes and cares
And youthful dreams, rewrought

By love's long magic, as they glow
On mem'ry's pictured wall,
But bid the spirit wiser grow
For love and hope and all

That make each better day the best
The wild'ring soul has known,
And present pleasures doubly blest
Through pleasures that have flown.

So I re-live the olden days
And join them to the new,
And ancient good, through modern ways
And present bliss renew.

A SONG FOR THE NEW YEAR

BECAUSE the New Year is so new,
And his story all untold,
We'll trust him fair for a heart that's true
And love him as the old.


There's a gleam of sunshine in his face,
A dimpled joy in his chin;
He moves on the varied curves of grace,
And smiles from warmth within.

But oh, my soul! thy vanished years
Were ever as brave as he;
Yet never was one without its tears,
Its blight and its misery.

Peace to the little loves we've loved
And the loves we've cast aside,
And tears for the friends our hearts approved
When the years were in their pride!

Yesterdays are but yesterdays,
Dim shadows upon the wall;
But they live on in the soul always
And the soul lives in them all.

Give us new life and a larger hope
And a brand new song to sing,
And who shall shout for a coming pope,
Or weep for a passing king?



We make for ourselves the merry days,
Love maketh the happy years,
And at the parting of the ways
There's naught so sweet as tears.

And when the fair fields fade from sight
And age groweth short of breath,
How sweetly falleth through the night
The solemn joy of death!

Because the new year is so new,
And his story all untold,
Life hails him fair and holds him true
And loves him as the old.

AN INDIAN-SUMMER DAY

A MIST of smoke is in the air,
The hills loom vaguely far away;
The light seems chastened everywhere,
This happy Indian-summer day.

O! sweet and strange the spell that binds
Our wayward moods in gentle thrall,—
The gauzy web that wreaths and winds
Round naked wood and haunted hall.

The world seems quaintly rich and old
And restful in its dreamy calm;
The aching heart is love-consoled
In healing tides of mint and balm.

Youth wanders smiling where dead leaves
Lie thickly on the winding road,
And dreams of love and half believes
The grove the Archer god's abode.

The old man totters here and there
Crooning old memories softly o'er,
His wrinkled face and snowy hair
Touched by the light that comes no more.

The dear grandmother, smiling still,
Sits by her wheel that seems to say,
In softest dronings, "Peace, good will!
Her life's an Indian-summer day."

The children's treble voices ring
In mellow music through the wood,
And every shy and winsome thing
Has caught the season's gentler mood.

All sounds are muffled, soft, subdued
To some delightful minor key,
E'en Bob White's shout of gratitude
Comes from the cornfield dreamily.

And when the ruddy sun goes down
And from the east the hunter's moon,
Wrapped in the twilight's hazy gown,
Looks on the pale, dead afternoon,

O'er amber seas and scarlet isles
There looms, far west, an inky cloud,
And wise, old crows in hurrying files
To shelter flee with croakings loud.

The pewees scud to bridge or byre,
Brown quails slip under clust'ring brush,
And Indian-summer's altar fire
Dies in the snow storm's deeper hush.

THE LILAC

A LIGHT-HEARTED throng, in the morning of
May,
We passed, where the lilac stood blushing with
bloom,
And my bonnie brunette broke me off a pink spray;
Now, fifty years later, I smell its perfume.

Then the lassies ran, laughing and crying, "Oh,
shame;
It's a shame to be hating a young fellow so!"
But I knew not the language of flowers, and the
flame
In my heart hope had kindled lost color and glow.

One day, long thereafter, I stood by the bier
Where the wife of my friend lay, pure, spotless
and white,
Yet cold as the snows, but I shed not a tear
For the soul of me'd gone on a long backward
flight

To the old country place, with its blossoms and
birds,
And I saw the pink cone that she gave me again,
And above the low hymn rose the petulant words
Of the girls who made sport of my ignorant pain.

O fragile first love, though you ever must break
In the cold, cruel winds, ere life reaches its June,
A lilac we'll plant for your dear, sacred sake
And we'll pray that its buds may be blossoming
soon.

A MIDWINTER DOUBT

SOME say the god was good to Philemon
When he transmuted him into an oak
For kindly service to his godship done;
And so it seems, I grant, on summer days
When love and joy clasp hands in forest ways
And free from cruel Winter's murderous stroke,
The oak expands his shining leaves and shakes
Them in the minty fragrance of the air,

Or when some warbled concert's music makes
His great top Orphic; but when, in despair
And nakedness, he tosses his wide arms,
Assailed by sleet, or winds that smite and rend
Him, bole and branch, where find you then the
charms
That oakhood may to age-worn mortal lend,
Or to the immortal spirit once a man?
Since each man's soul, however strong and brave,
Grows weary in such tumults Borean
As round the oak in ruffian fury rave.

SONGS OF THE HERE AND THE HEREAFTER

THE STAR AND THE CLOD

"**A**H me!" I said, "this broken clod of clay,
So fair, so frail, is but a ruin now;"
When suddenly from it there sped a ray,
As from the star that shines on morning's brow.

The ray rose up, self-cent'ring, till it passed,
A full-orbed star, from which a mournful light
Fell on the broken clay until, at last,
In the far sky, the star was lost to sight.

Was it sleep's vision or a waking dream
That showed the star uprising from the clod
It once made fair with love's immortal gleam
As some rare spirit newly sent from God?

Or dream, or vision, still that mystic ray
In mem'ry lingers as 'twere loath to part,
And sweetens sorrow, though the clod's decay
And death's cold shadow chill the yearning heart.

The clod lies broken and the star has flown,
The fragments fade back to the earthy mold;
The light has fled and heaven reclaimed its own,
But God is good and mercies manifold,

And every star in every clod may rise,
When the clod breaks, to join the greater light,
And love survive love's saddest sacrifice
As phosphor's glow succeeds the stormy night.

This broken clod that once enthroned a star,
Yet prisoned it: Let mem'ry hold it dear!
No thought may rise, no vision soar so far,
But this dear clay may to it reappear.

The clod shall mingle with its kindred dust
And pass into a thousand precious things,
Yet memory shall hold in sacred trust
Its pallid beauty when her soul took wings.

AS THE MISTLETOE CLINGS TO THE
TREE

THE mistletoe clings to the living tree
And the lichen to the stone;
Thus close to the life we have cling we,
And every one to his own.

To the fading bark till the bark is dry
And the sap is sinking low,
And the winds that whistle and hurry by
Are laden with sleet and snow.

But the winds may rave and the tempests come,—
Sharp spice to our Christmas cheer,—
And sorrow be added to sorrow's sum
At close of a luckless year;

Yet closer than lichen or parasite
We cleave to the things that be,
Despite all the promises seers recite
And visions clairvoyants see.

"Is life worth living?" the doubter cries,
Then calls a physician in;
While the maid, betrayed, with a shot replies,
And ceases to mourn or sin;

But wisdom giveth whatever she hath
To the life and the love she knows,
And trusteth in God for the aftermath
That shall follow death's repose;

And she hath fair thoughts for the Christmas time,
And a tender care hath she
For the love that is sweeter than song or rhyme
And the greater love to be.

WAKING OR SLEEPING

WE wake or sleep and the world goes round
And time fareth on and on,
With the daily task and the hammer's sound,
And the shining share and the furrowed ground,
And the wild bird's song at dawn.

We sleep or wake, for the world is good
And the fields are fair to see;
And the maiden sings in her maidenhood,
And the mother smiles, as the mother should,
When the time goes happily.

We wake or sleep and the endless gain
Exceedeth the daily loss,
And ever the pleasure is more than pain;
Though cares may come and tears may stain,
Yet the crown succeeds the cross.

We sleep or wake and the children come
With laughter and shout and song,
Then pass and merge with the human sum
To sew, to plow, to follow the drum,
Or struggle with Mammon's throng.

We wake or sleep and the hair turns gray
And the heart gets sad and sore,
And the tot'ring limb has a wicked way
Of warning a man that his waking day
Is passing to come no more.

We sleep or wake, but God watches on,
And the heavens His love declare
And he cares for us, be it dusk or dawn,
And we look to Him and our fears are gone
With the darkness and despair.

We wake or sleep, but a deeper sleep,
Be it ever so short or long,
Shall overtake us, but wherefore weep
If the steadfast soul may its guerdon keep
When the death-cold shadows throng?

THE INTERPRETER

HE sings of joy who dwells with sorrow,
For sorrow is a sorry shrew,
And he from joy the strength would borrow
To cope with her ado;

But while he sings his lightest numbers,
Through many a strain and haunting tone,
Bear one sweet note that never slumbers
And it is sorrow's own.

Thus to the soul the truest feelings,
The deepest, tenderest thoughts that come,
Enlightening it with love's revealings,
Distil from sorrow's sum.

THE SINGERS

HEAR the singers singing to the list'ning earth
their songs

Ere the morning blushes that shall gladden into
day!

"Hallelujah, hallelujah!" shout the tuneful throngs,

"Love's Messiah sleepeth in the manger on the
hay,

While His star above is glowing

And to Him are wise men going:

Hallelujah, hallelujah! Christ, the Lord, is born
today."

Hear the sacred singers in their rapture and de-
light!

"Peace to earth from heaven descendeth with the
child that's born:

Hallelujah! love exceedeth now the warrior's
might,

And good will to men extendeth with the rising
morn:

Hallelujah! loud we sing it,

Men and seraphs join to wing it

To the world's remotest nations. Hallelujah!
Christ is born."

Hear the swift, impatient singers! brooking no de-
lay,

They proclaim love all triumphant over ancient
wrong,

Crying, "Beat your swords to plowshares, love is
lord today,
Bend your spears to sickles now and join the
harvest song!
Hallelujah! Peace forever,
Light and gladness fading never,
For the meek the earth inherit and are, more than
giants strong."

Hear the song the gracious singers sang so long
ago!

Overbattlefields and prisons still the measures roll,
Swelling ever down the ages, as they come and go:
"Hallelujah! Christ is with us and the race is
whole;
Whole in love's embrace supernal,
Whole in peace and joy eternal;
Man shall be to man united, heart to heart and
soul to soul."

Trust the singers, O my brothers! though the way
is long;

For the centuries are but measured school-days
of the race,
And though blood still flows as water and oppres-
sions throng,
Still the world of man moves forward to serener
grace:
Man shall be to man true neighbor,
Honor shall join hands with labor,
Peace shall reign at last, through justice, locking
all in love's embrace.

Hear the rapt, prophetic singers, there by Bethle-
hem,
Singing to the tribes and nations, "Christ, the
Lord, is born;
Bring Him gifts of myrrh and incense, gold and
precious gem;—
Not the vinegar and hyssop, not the bloody
thorn:
Bring to Him love's coronation,
Praise Him, every tribe and nation;
Hallelujah, hallelujah! Christ, the Lord, is born."

ONLY AN OLD SONG

ONLY an old song, only a love song,
The song of a day long dead;
But the sweet notes throng the whole night long
With rain on the roof o'erhead;
And the rain beats overhead, my dear,
And the rain beats overhead,
And the wind wails by with a note of fear
As the old song falls on the ravished ear
From lips, as the roses, red.

Oh, the red rose blooms by the place of tombs,
Where the sainted singers sleep;
A bud we may break, for the old love's sake,
And the tryst of the old time keep;

And the tryst of the old time keep, my dear,
And the tryst of the old time keep.
Though the old house quake and the windows
shake,
Yet the song warbles on as I lie awake,
And sweet are the tears I weep.

Only an old song, only a love song;
A song of the long ago;
A child's song sung when the years were young,
And we met in the morning glow;
When we met in the morning glow, my dear,
When we met in the morning glow.
Still it breathes delight through the starless
night,
But the soul responds with a feeble flight,
And the oil in the lamp is low.

REGRET

THE bow was bent as the crescent moon,
The arrow drawn to the head;
When a hand released the cord a tune
Rose keen as the arrow sped;
The sharp note died and the arrow fled,
But a wee bird fluttered and fell down dead
And the wind went moaning by.

"O, arrow, why did you smite my bird?
Little bird, why must you die?"
The arrow never a whisper heard,
But a cloud rose in the sky,
And never a muscle the warbler stirred
Though a rain of tears my vision blurred
As the wind went wailing by.

O, long I wait by the garden gate
For a song I hear no more;
The mourning mate, still desolate,
Repeateth some brief notes o'er—
Her threnody's little score—
From a wee heart sadly sore—
And the plaintive wind goes by.

The bow hangs broken upon the wall,
The arrow lies where it fell,
And a dull heart-ache shall long recall
That I aimed, alas! too well;
The wind goes moaning by to tell
I aimed the assassin shaft too well,
For I slew him, even I.

CONSOLATION

WE who retain our fleeting mortal breath,
And yet look on the awful face of death,
See not beneath its cold, remorseless stare,
The better purpose that is hidden there,

Nor note its silent eloquence of rest,
Peace to the soul and quiet to the breast.

Death comes in cruel guise to challenge life,
And with a stroke dispelleth mortal strife;
It touches fever, anguish, passion, pain,
And only dust and deepest calm remain
Where late they raged and in their fury wrought
Ill for the body, torture to the thought,
While the freed man departeth to his God
To meet His smile or feel the chast'ning rod
That love's conditions may require to place
His soul *en rapport* with the soul of grace.

"Cease, Optimist! what consolation lies
In death's dark deed that closes infant eyes,
Or-into savage silence bears away
Fair youth and beauty from the light of day?"

I guessed your thought before you spoke, O friend!
But think you, youth and beauty have an end
Unto the young when death comes in between
Their radiant selves and this imperfect scene,
Or childhood fails the little ones that pass
As morning sunlight through a darkened glass,
Because we see them not, nor hear, nor know
The life where unto little children go?

What fatal causes born of mortal sin,
Or want of wisdom bring conditions in
That rend the young till death dispels their pain,
If man might conquer them 'twere greatest gain.

The world needs childhood's innocence and truth
And all the marv'ous potencies of youth;
But, think you, He who heeds the sparrow's fate
Hath not the soul of love to compensate
The young that lose their youth while yet 'tis morn
And the sweet dew is on the infant corn?
The corn must grow and blossom and mature:
Though children die may childhood not endure
For those who go as well as those who stay
And youth and beauty have their halcyon day?

I know the sorrow, oft have felt the pain
That comes when death cuts through the silken
chain
And breaks some precious pitcher at the spfing,
And the long anguish separations bring,
And yet no child, no friend is dead to me;
I count each living though I may not see
One cherished face through wrath of flame, or
gloom
Of funeral pyre or verdure garnished tomb.

If this be but a dreamer's dream 'tis sweet
And has no thorns to tear my weary feet:
I can accept all truth that science yields
To him who toils in her delightful fields
And yield no faith that brings the spirit food
Since God is just and justice always good,
And dusk to dawn, from rise to set of sun,
Justice and mercy are forever one.

RESURGAM

AUTUMN fades and for the last time
Falls the robin's evening lay,
Like a happy note of morning
Trembling down the dying day.
Fallen leaves are all around us,
Memories haunt the wood and wold;
Still we recognize "Resurgam"
Written in the season's gold.

Naught there is but hath a future,
Bird or blossom, moth or bee;
Has God given them the morning
And denied the dawn to me?
This is true, I dare not doubt it,
Never was immortal curse,
And the promise, the resurgam,
Is to all God's universe.

Though the pride of man proclaim him
And his weal heaven's only care,
Still within his soul must linger
Doubts that whisper low "beware!"
If God counts the falling sparrows,
Think you that the count is vain?
Wherefore count or men or sparrows
If the dead shall dead remain?

THE BYE AND BYE

A WEE bird singeth to the soul
A sad, yet hopeful lay,
To sweeten sorrow's bitter dole
And drive despair away;
Or when the faint heart fainter grows
And clouds obscure the sky,
Repeats the golden note he knows
Of sunshine bye and bye.
His blithest call by hut or hall,
His tenderest, twittered cry,
Hath this refrain for mortals all:
"The better, bye and bye!"

O gentlest bird! your note I've heard
Through many stormy years;
It oft to hope my pulse has stirred
And stilled my coward fears.
Though farther far than sun or star
The goal you sing may seem,
No sense of distance comes to mar
The magic of the dream
It weaves for me, till worry free,
I trust your Orphic cry,
And dimly see the joy to be
My kingdom bye and bye.

"But wherefore ply the bye and bye
For aye? Or, tell me this:
Why for the future sing or sigh
And count no present bliss?"

When thus I'd queried, softly came
The answer warbled low,
"Hope is a present joy, a flame
That blesses with its glow;
And so I sing, head under wing,
The dawn that draweth nigh,
The fadeless dawn that love shall bring,
The radiant bye and bye."

SHELLEY'S VISION OF ALLEGRA*

SHE arose from the silver sea
Sweet as the morning air,
And the sea imploringly
Leaped up to her rippled hair,
Then ran down suddenly
From her white arms shining, bare,

As she waved them o'er her head
And beckoned with them wide;
But whatever things she said
In the watery murmur died;
The wind sank still as the dead
And the soul's sight multiplied.

* The incident which suggested these lines is related of that most spiritual of poets, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and is as follows: "While out sailing one day, shortly before his death, Shelley saw a vision of Allegra, Lord Byron's daughter, rise from the sea, joyously clap her hands and beckon to him."

In joy she clapped her hands
And the soft wind stirred the sails,
For the quick wind understands
When joy o'er grief prevails,
And the wave laughed on the sands
Where it often sighs and wails,

So she beckoned once and again,
And sank back into the sea,
And I knew the meaning then
Of the message strange to me,
For I saw with the spirit's ken
By the light of eternity.

The joy of Allegra's smile
And the beckoning of her hands,
And the waves that, mile on mile,
Sing to the shifting sands,
Woo me, win me all the while,
And no one understands.

AN AUTUMN LEAF

DIP'T in the fountain of the sunshine,
When the sun has first arisen,
A scarlet leaf from a climbing vine
Falls into an old man's prison,
And his faint heart feels a sudden thrill,
And a strange surprise of joy,
For he thinks of the scarlet oaks on the hill,
And himself a little boy.

The leaf, with the sunshine in its heart,
Down fluttering seems to say,
"I am of thy better life a part,
A part of thy fair, young day.
I'm ripened in sun and rain and frost,
And whatever is fair in me,
I bring to thee from a day long lost
For a day that is to be."

Withered by storm and blight and pain,
And weakness that men call sin,
The life that shall never be whole again
Is touched to the sweet within
By a gentler pressure than that of grief,
Or the thought of prison and hate,
And the old man lifts to his lips the leaf,
And whispers, "'Tis not too late."

A SONG OF THE FORGOTTEN

THE CRY OF AN INSECT DROWNING IN A LILY BELL

I AM forgotten quite
In morn's concerted praise;
None miss my wayward flight
In the sweet sunset rays,
As I lie drowning here
In the lily's golden blaze.

O, fatal lily urn!
Wherefore should I from thee
Seek once again to turn
To life's inconstancy?
And yet, I loved my wings,
My wings so frail and free!

The poet loves his wings,
His wings so frail and free!
Aloft in dreams he swings
And hums contentedly,
I also loved my wings
And song as well as he;

But now in viscous sweets
Bound by my wings I lie,
No more with love's conceits
To soar in joy on high:
Thus bound in fatal sweets
Oft doth the poet die.

A LOVER'S THOUGHT OF DEATH

I WHO have loved the land, the sea, the dawn,
The faith of woman and the strength of man;
Must I go hence and wander, lonely, on,
Bewailing me that life is but a span,
Or crying to the ebb-tide's seaward flow
Wait, hasty waters wait, farewell dear land, I go?

Dearer than starlight, sweeter than the day
Or all the songs of all the birds of June
To me, the gentle soul, the poet's lay,
The wafted incense of familiar tune
From lips that sing, or mellow horns that blow :
Must I discard my little raptures, when I go?

More sacred than the bard's divinest thought
I hold this frail humanity of ours
That toils and suffers, though, perchance for
naught
But some frail bubbles breaking mid the flowers
That fade and perish in the outer woe;
And must I part with it forever as I go?

Now on the tree that bears the cruel thorn
The waxen buds in starry splendors break
And where the mountain avalanche has torn
Its ragged path the vernal greeneries wake,
The glad earth smiles and minted zephyrs blow :
Must I who love all love forsake my loves and
go?

Yes, I must go and thou shalt follow me
Into the darkness, though our feet delay,
And all the orchards more abundantly
Shall bud and blossom when we are away,
And richer fruits upon the boughs shall grow
And all true love be more abounding when we go.

Wherefore let us not murmur at our lot,
Nor yet distrust the land to which we fare,
Remembering that our Lord forgetteth not
And every state abideth in His care.
He giveth his beloved sleep and lo!
Love's star divine lights all the pathway we must
go.

LOVE IS ALL

I WILL not hear the dying word
Of any friend, nor stroke the wing
Of any little wounded bird.
Love is the dearest thing.
—*Wraith-Song of Sprairoll.*

O! Love, Love, Love,
Has thy angel gone above?
Does a shadow lie between us,
Or do age and sorrow wean us
From the heart of love?

The grave, grave, grave,
Has it made the soul a slave?
Shall the senseless clods that cover
Quench the fervor of the lover
In the damp, cold grave?

Ah! no, no, no!

Through the sable halls of woe,
Down the singing tides of glory,
Flows the old Astrean story:
"Love is all we know."

O! frail, frail, frail,

The ambitions that prevail
Through this evanescent being.
Love is all to the All-seeing
That shall never fail.

Still more, more, more,

May our souls go on before,
And the light that is immortal
Shine across the future's portal
Ere we pass the door.

With peace peace, peace,

May the love of love increase,
And the lover's silken tether
Bind our willing hearts together
In the bonds of peace!

Lo! here, here, here,

In an atmosphere as clear
As the light the stars are breathing
Rounds the world of love's bequeathing
To the perfect sphere.

It grows, grows, grows,
And the oneness of it flows
Through all doubt or tears or laughter,
Through the here and the hereafter
And through Death's repose.

Oh! life, life, life,
Let us learn from all thy strife
For man the needful thing is
Love, that servant is and king is,
Linking life to life!

Dear heart, heart, heart!
May the love of love impart
Unto thee the perfect pleasure
That has neither bound nor measure
When it fills the heart.

FACT AND FABLE

CONTENT to know, whate'er befall,
Mid transmutation's wild alarms,
The world of man, the heavens and all
Are safe in everlasting arms,

'Tis joy to dream the time away,
Ere lamps are lighted or the dark
Has shrouded evening's latest ray,
Or yet unveiled the meteor's spark,

To swing 'twixt mortal and divine
In some weird nebulae of thought,
Where systems grow to love's design
And suns are launched and worlds are wrought,

With fancy freely wand'ring far
As light may flash or spirit fly,
From morning flower to evening star,
From Dante's hell to Raphael's sky.

Since now we know the joy of dreams
And science plumes the dreamer's wings,
While her enlarging glory streams
O'er seas and sands and sentient things,

We mock at miracles no more,
Nor Sinai's tables, Delphi's shrine;
Now modern fact compounds the lore
Of pagan fables, Scripts divine,

The old is new, the new is old
And still the ancient myths remain,
And though the Pantheon's gods are mold,
The mold is rich with heavenly gain.

And yet we are but in the dawn
Of far diviner dreams than ours,
When mightiest thoughts of ages gone
Shall be as buds to full-blown flowers.

Though fable faintly shadowed forth
The glory that today is plain,
It gave to man a promise worth
A thousand years of godless gain,

And so I dream as shadows drift
And deepen over wood and wold,
And reck not which is greater gift
The modern fact or fable old.

NOT HE WHO MOST BELIEVES

NOT he who most believes is most
In harmony with things divine;
But he who shapes, nor counts the cost,
His daily life to love's design.

And they who toil for souls that fail
To win them back to virtue's plain
Are bearers of love's holy grail
And sowers of immortal gain.

A creed may be a lifeless shell,
The mummy of some ancient truth,
But love is more than miracle
And mercy hath eternal youth.

A SHEAF OF SONNETS

THE DREAMER

I WATCHED a dreamer, on a dreamy day,
Who wandered, smiling, through a vocal wood,
And idly sang therein an idle lay—
A song whereof he little understood,
Or cared to understand, for that his dreams
Had far outflown the boundaries of time,
And he wrought grandly with celestial themes
The while his voice droned on the shallow rhyme.

It was a dual life he lived that day
As joyously he sang, yet scarcely knew
That he was singing in the common way
That men whose words exceed their wisdom do.
His song was Earth's, his radiant smile the Sky's;
He was his dream, and it was paradise.

A HEALTH TO IGNORANCE

WHERE "ignorance is bliss," as sung by Pope,
And it is therefore, "folly to be wise,"
Let happy mortals thank their friendly skies
For steadfast faith and onward-leading hope;

Since knowledge so may be a mocking flame
To wither joy or show love's deadly shame,
Or bloody fiend's hand tugging at the rope
Which chokes the life from some devoted heart,
Or poison on a foeman's stinging dart,
The swift-winged messenger of mortal woe—
So here's to ignorance! Let's boldly drink
The health of ignorance, nor slyly wink
At purblind Knowledge when our glasses clink
For joy of knowing that we do not know.

THE BETTER WAY

IF, following the truth as truth was seen,
With hand wide-open and with loving heart,
A man has striven well to act his part
In life's hard battle, then "the might have been,"—
How the dull present, narrow, poor and mean,
Where now elysian gladness, but for some
Mistake of fickle judgment,—should not come
With vain regrets and ill-concealed chagrin
To murder joy and coddle hateful spleen.

The man is more than wisdom, knowledge, pelf,
Content with God, howe'er with his own past
At variance, in thought, he finds himself,
Let peace be his, and bread on waters cast,
In love's benigance, feed his soul at last!

THE MURDERED TREES

I WALK across the barren fields and weep,
In melancholy madness, for my trees,
The great, potential trees that, rooted deep
In this brown soil, were priests and prophecies
To my waked youth, when in their centuried morn,
By axe unscarred, untouched by red fire-blight,
They cast long shadows where glad things were
born
To life's perennial drama of delight,—
Complacent genii that through sun-kissed leaves
Smiled on the cabin's children at their play.
Trees, children, dreams! how outraged nature
grieves
Because they are not! Yet my steps delay,
And lingering, I recall the happy scene
Where they supremed it o'er a world of green.

SHAKSPEARE

HOW deftly Shakspeare, in his milder moods,
Seeks out the springs of rustic happiness,
Lays bare their secrets, or in Arden's woods
Finds lore to make the motley jester wise
And teach the great their follies to despise!
How like a god's his infinite, sad stress
O'er fall'n ambition's utter wretchedness!

If Cæsar bleed or young Antonius spout,
Or bad King Richard rage his bad life out,
Though dotard Lear go babbling his distress,
Or roars the Moor with jealousy's mad pain,
Or Hamlet rave and tug at Sorrow's chain—
A prince divine, though twenty times insane—
He dowereth each from his great soul's excess.

ARIEL

DEAR, vagrant, vanishing deceiver! Still
May thy deceptions be as they have been,
To make men happier so to garnish ill
With fancy's fragrant vines and boughs of green,
That woe's hard lines may soften into smiles
And fickle folly follow virtue's path
To do her service, while thy song beguiles
Imperial Neptune from his murd'rous wrath,
Or murmurs of the wondrous sea-change wrought
In ship-wrecked wand'rer by the wizard wave;
Or, with a trick, though bring'st, forthwith, to
nought
Sedition's rage, and art no more a slave;
Be ever more thyself—the knave's despair,
The lover's hope—swift spirit of the air!

A BEVY OF BIRD SONGS

THE FIRST BLUE BIRD

SWEETHEART! Our locks are thin and gray,
Our eyes lack luster and men say
"Their youth has vanished." Well-a-day,
I hear a blue bird singing!

The lambs go leaping down the lane,
The sunlight flickers on the pane,
The guineas clank a shriller strain;
I hear a blue bird singing.

The children's voices clearer ring,
The elm buds swell, the grasses spring
And maple drops are pattering;
I hear a blue bird singing.

Ah! Love was never yet so cold,
So dead and cold, so dumb and old,
It leapt not to the warmth untold
That thrills the blue bird's singing.

They call us old, who years decry,
The bird sings down the cruel lie,
We're young forever, you and I;
I hear a blue bird singing.

THE MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT IN
THE THICKET

THE Yellow-throat's ecstatic song
From yonder willowy thicket streams
In varied mellow notes that throng
Like mingling joys in happy dreams.

Through many changes runs his fire
Of rapt and rapid numbers round
The copse's rough and ragged bound,
So full of longing, sweet desire
They seem like prayers of rhythmic sound,
Or choral hymns of joyful thanks,
Inspired by love in love's own bower,
That stir the blooms on flowery banks
And sanctify an idle hour.

The seeker waits and watches long,
And parts the greenery east and west
Before the prophet of the song
Reveals himself, as self-confessed,
He warbles near his prim wife's nest,
In varied olive-green and gold,
Almost as lovely as his lay.
The intruder views him, joy-consolated
For toil, suspense and long delay,
And, all his soul to rapture stirred,
Says softly, "Now I see the bird
And this is a red letter day!"

THE SONG SPARROW ON THE MAPLE

LISTEN, my child, to the song in the air!
Is it here,
Is it there?

Is the singer a soul, free of substance or care,
A lute zephyr-stirred, or a translucent bird,
That maketh no show of himself anywhere?

Now high on the maple, now low on the ash;
To the thick of the beech, now it runs like a flash
Of star-twinkled music, then softly away:
We rise up to follow; but pause, and, delay,
When down from the maple the notes ripple out,
And we hail the glad singer with answering shout,
As we spy him, secure on the wind-wavered limb,—
A glorious, shy fellow, a vitalized hymn,
A sonnet divine the Almighty has wound
In a soft, vibrant spiral of manifold sound;
A hair-spring of ecstasy, rapture unbound,
That rewinds with the motion wherewith 'tis un-
wound.

I cry, "You've eluded us long, witching bird;"
But the child whispers, "No! such a thought is ab-
surd;
'Twas our ears and our eyes that befooled us, the
bird
Was there all the while; but his song thrilled the
air

With a joy that went warbling, now here and now
there;
And we'll know from this hour, when that jubilant
tune
We may hear in the wood, 'tis the song sparrow's
rune,
As with white throat expanding, brown wings
edged with gray
He sits a mere speck, on the high, maple spray;
For he loves in dense woods to uplift his gray
breast
And sing his soul out near his wee wifey's nest."

THE INDIGO BUNTING ON THE BLASTED TREE

CLEAR, sweet and true,
The Bunting's note
Persists and clings, as doth the blue
In the wee warbler's throat.

You hear it ringing down the vale;
You climb the hill, 'tis farther on:
Where tangled brush and briars prevail
And forest glories stand withdrawn
In walls about a half-cleared field,
That penetrating note, once more,
Falls on the ear, as if to yield
Some joy of sound unknown before;

Then, high upon a blasted tree,
Contrasting with the milder blue
Of heaven's o'er-arching canopy,
The bird sits, sight-revealed to you;
But ere you may your glass adjust
To study him, he cups his wings
And, with a sudden, graceful thrust
Of airy motion, downward swings
To where his mate, mid brush and briar,
Or in some thick-set shrubbery broods:
Then, finding her "all right," mounts higher
Than where he sat before, the woods
And open spaces ring again
With song that beats like summer rain
On limb and leaf 'till field and plain
And woodsy copse respond "Amen!"

THE FLICKER, IN THE DARK OF THE YEAR

A BIRD for all seasons, he bringeth most cheer
When he comes with the storm in the dark
of the year
And picks purple berries of ivy and clings,
Like Jack Tar to his rope, to the vine as it swings,
Or pluckily holds with his frost-reddened feet
To the cherry-tree limb all encrusted with sleet,
And we love him the more for the need he supplies—
The example of courage, the strength to arise

And buffet the storm with no tremor of fear
And a voice that gives thanks in the dark of the
year.

When meadows are emerald and orchards are
white

The Flicker's abroad with the first gleam of light;
His notes have a ring of rejoicing, his cries
Are calls of affection or merry replies;
Till we hail ev'ry note of his song on the fence,
As he heralds the dawn with a rapture intense;
Then huzza! for the crescent he wears on his breast,
His broad checkered wings and the red in his crest,
For the nest and the mate that he guardeth with
care,

For his rockaway flight on the billowy air,
And hurrah! o'er and o'er for the courage and cheer
That the brave Flicker brings in the dark of the
year!

“THOUGH LOST TO SIGHT TO MEMORY
DEAR”

THE lark that builds by the meadow rill
And sings on the meadow rails,
Flies far away when the frosts distil
And the wintry storm prevails;
But the happy lay of the absent lark
In memory lingers long,
And the windy day and the sleety dark
Are cheered by his merry song.

SNOW BIRDS, IN GARDEN CLOSES

WHEN softly from the leaden skies
The January snows descend
'Till silence on the landscape lies
And trees with their white burdens bend,
While not a plume of gray nor gold,
No burnished throat nor scarlet wing
Appears to glorify the cold,
Bald season, or to hint of spring,
Then come brown flurries of trim birds
In garden closes eddying 'round
With fluttering joy, like hurrying words
Of happy children, yet small sound
Of music makes the gladness sweet;
But Nature, bountiful of charms,
Has blest these wand'ers, frail and fleet,
That nestle in the winter's arms
And hop and hold where tempests meet
In his torn beard and hoary hair,
Till brush and briar and brittle weed
Break with the feathered fruit they bear.

Whence come the birds with merry speed,
The child, untaught of books or art,
Knows little, but he feels the thrills
Of quick wings fluttering with his heart,
'Till youth's unsullied gladness fills
His spirit with a wild desire
To buffet storms and from them bring
The breath that fans ambition's fire,

Or, like our modest Winter King,
Wins strength and valor for dark days,
Or daring thoughts that make it gain
To live when bloom and warbled praise
Are lost to naked wood and plain;
And so we bless, with feeble words,
The snow storm's aftermath of birds.

EMIGRATING BIRDS RESTING BY
THE WAY

WHEN the Vireo May proclaimeth
And the Kinglet comes,
When the purple Redbud flameth
And the pheasant drums,
Scores of wee birds, gay of feather,
Greet us at the dawn;
Rest in pairs or grouped together
By the wood or lawn;
Here today, perhaps, tomorrow
On the North-bound wing,—
Emigrants from whom we borrow
Many a gracious thing,—
Song and color, joy of motion,
Faith that guides them home,
Over continent and ocean,
To their "Kingdom come;"—

For we also wander longing,
Led by faith or fate,
To some unknown land where thronging
Loves and lovers wait;
Finding grace and consolation,
For the journey long,
In the joy of estivation
And the wild bird's song.

THE TUFTED TITMOUSE

WHEN the tardy sun, in winter,
Briefly shines—a blossom hinter—
To a tune, first sweet then sweeter,
Sings the Titmouse: "Peter, Peter!"
And when maple sap is falling,
Then he magnifies his calling,
As in clearer notes repeats he:
"Peter, Peter, te te, te te!"

Why that silly chorus, "te te?"
You may never know: discreet, he
Guards his secret for his sweetheart,
Whom, with many wile and neat art,
Woos he, flitting, fluting, hopping,
While the maple's blood is dropping,
Or, when sorrowing moods deceive us,
Pipes his lone song: "Grievous, grievous."

Ashen-hued, but pert and showy,
Crowned and tufted, what a beau he
Ever is! polite and gracious
To the sex, and yet sagacious,
Though for love, in peace or war,
He's a very Lochinvar,
While his sweetheart blithe, and chipper,
Well might win the fairy's slipper.

"Sugar Bird" the farmers call him,
And whatever may befall him,
He's a very welcome fellow
When the elm puts on its yellow
Veil of misty bloom, and willows
Show gray catkins and the pillows
Of brown mosses shoot green spangles
On the ledge's ragged angles

Ere the graeckel, catbird, robin,
Set the vernal pulses throbbing
To each wild, delirious measure,
Then our "Sugar Bird" 's a treasure;
But, when April breeze and blossom
Warm the blood and thrill the bosom,
Their loud minstrelsies exceed him,
'Till our dull ears cease to heed him.

Then to some tall tree's bole, hollow,
If his flight your eyes but follow,
There, the curious crowd eluding,
You may find his partner brooding

Eggs with thin shells, tinted, creamy,
Lilac, rufous, hinting dreamy
Forethought of the life abiding,
Songless yet, within them hiding;

And, forsaking each great singer,
If you'll for a moment linger
With your thoughts on him, you'll hear him
Warbling to the wifey near him:
"Peter, Peter! who is neater,
Prettier, wiser or discreeter,
Than you are dear heart? I greet ye:
Peter, Peter, te te, te te!"

THE MOCKING BIRD'S SONG

I WOULD arise, if my soul were not sad,
And sing with the wind in the leaves;
I would be still if my heart were not glad
With the joy of the long, vernal eves.
And in sadness or gladness
I'd shout to the madness
Of the song that the Mocking Bird weaves.

Into the soul comes his song like a psalm,
Uplifts it and bears it away;
On the sad heart it falleth like balm;
With the glad heart it weaveth the day

Into music and motion
Of joy and devotion,
Light and shadow, and ripple and play,

Bubbles and breaks into beautiful things,
Soars and shimmers like morning light;
With breath of blossom and beat of wings;
Joy of angel, passion of sprite;
With each exaltation
Of song's dissipation
It resolves and dissolves in delight.

RHYMES OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

AN OLD-TIME CHRISTMAS AT THE COUNTRY SCHOOL

IT was Christmas morn at the country school;
There was snow on the ground, there was ice
on the pool,
But the master was up with the dawn that day
And off to his school in the earliest gray.

There was wood to split and a fire to light,
The floor to sweep and the copies to write;
Some sums to do that had mocked his skill
On the evening before, and many a quill

From wings of the scorned domestic goose
To shape into pens for the "scholars'" use.
He bore a great pack, like Santa Claus,
And a big-bellied basket, too, because

He had things to carry no boy must see,
Nor patron of high or low degree,
To be deftly hidden and smuggled away
By the little light of the new-born day.

* * * * *

When Phoebus, winking through vapors cold,
Had hung the trees with silver and gold
And slyly peeped in at the schoolhouse door
The room was cozy and warm once more.

The pens were mended, the sums were done,
The copies were written and imps of fun
Were dancing a jig in the teacher's eyes
As he thought of the children and their surprise,

When—but whence comes this unusual din,
And why do the big boys come rushing in,
And the girls and wee ones tremble and wait
As if for some direly impending fate?

Now the fierce mob cries for a Christmas treat,
For apples and cider and something sweet;
But the master assumes a judicial air
And hears their plea and denies their prayer.

Then slyly explaining, "When pleas are lost
Proceedings are taxed to the loser's cost,
And so, as the matter is plain and clear,
The treat is coming from you this year."

"We'll take an appeal to the pond!" they cry;
"We'll duck the master and freeze him dry;
Break the ice again and the dose repeat
And 'conquer or die' for our Christmas treat."

They end their words with a rush, but lo!
Their sudden motion was far too slow,
For the master had, with unusual care,
Left the window open for sun and air

Or some other purpose, and, like a flash,
Leaped through the opening and made a dash
Into the forests and over the hill,
Scurrying away with a right good will.

Some leap after him, and some to the door
Turn for an exit, and soon a full score
Of brawny young fellows, in brown and gray,
Are chasing the teacher, who runs away.

They follow and follow with laugh and shout
As the master goes dodging in and out
Among the trees and through tangled nooks,
For the chase goes on till the hour for "books."

But they cannot hem him with all their skill,
For when they are swiftest, he's swifter still,
While the little ones wait in trembling dread
And the grown girls weep till their eyes are red,

For "the master'll be drowned and froze, boo-hoo!
And the boys get hung, and what'll we do?"
Then the tears break out into fresher streams
Mingled, at times, with hysterical screams.

But the big boys weary and fall behind,
While the master seems fresh and gaining wind,
As boldly he turns him about once more
And pushes amain for the schoolhouse door.

"He fails, and we have him," they shout; but no;
They are far too eager, their feet too slow,
He's in at the door, he has seized his rod;
He's a hero now, an avenging god.

As tall as the ceiling is high he seems,
Undimmed and unconquered his proud eye gleams,
He raps with his ruler and twice repeats,
In a strong, full voice, the command, "to seats!"

All weary and panting and short of breath,
The boys file in, and, as quiet as death
Save for the noise that their breathings impart
And throbbing of many an anxious heart,

They await the doom that is soon to fall
From the righteous rage that involves them all;
Then, presto! the master says, speaking low,
"It is Christmas morn, as, I think, you know,

"And Christmas, that cometh but once a year,
Is a time for happiness, time for cheer,
A time for good gifts, for the old books say
That 'the good Lord Jesus was born today,'

"And His spirit is born in our lives anew
In ev'ry good work that our weak hands do.
And in all things gentle and kind and pure
It comes with the love that shall all endure.

"Yet this 'day of days' is the day we make
Our very best gifts for the dear Lord's sake,
And 'give and forgive' is the thought we praise
In our words and deeds on this 'day of days.'

"And, I bethink me," he said, with a smile,
"Of something I found this morning;" and while
He stooped to remove some boards in the floor,
Quick whispers were heard, then audible roar,

As he drew up and displayed to their eyes
A bag and a basket of marv'lous size
All packed and crammed full as ever they'd hold
Of apples famous and oranges gold,

With candies and kisses and nuts from the South,
With cakes from the baker's that melt in the mouth,
And raisins and figs and a pocket of dates
And other good things, and, to serve them for
plates,

Two quires of brown paper to make up and twirl
Into full horns of plenty for each boy and girl;
And last, but not least, all their hearts to delight,
Two brown jugs of cider came bumping in sight.

"Now, four of you plaintiffs who lost your bad
cause,
And four of you lassies, whose tears were applause,
Come forward and make up and gather and fill
A horn for each 'scholar,' well taxing your skill

In counting and adding, from two to two score,
Make each equal each and none less and none more;
And then pass them out bulging with Christmas joy
To gladden the heart of each girl and each boy!"

So ordered the master, and thus it was done,
And faces with sunshine were now overrun;
All hearts were as thankful as hearts ever be,
As morning to noon hurried on merrily,

The old brownny water gourd eagerly sped
From lip to glad lip, still replenished and fed
With a beverage fit for the gods of old,
From the great jugs poured out in a flood of gold.

The boys were dismissed to the woods very soon,
For "town ball" was "topical" that afternoon,
While a wee lassie sat in the master's seat
And sang as the big girls danced "weevily wheat."

Thus fared it one Christmas of long, long ago;
And now that the master is lying so low,
Where birds sing above him or snows gently fall,
That day of defeat seems the best day of all.

AFTER NOONTIDE

A BABY'S COME TO OUR HOUSE

A BABY'S come to our house and if he under-
 stands
 The meaning of his double chin, his little dimpled
 hands
 And his blue eyes full of laughter, as he bobbles up
 and down
 On his mother's lap so lightly, he's the happiest
 chap in town.

It's been a score of years or so since our old house
 has known
 The cackle of a baby boy we called "our very own,"
 And now, whene'er a baby comes a-visiting our way
 We're back again that minute to some old, familiar
 day

When babies toddled round us in our little cottage
 home
 And made it richer far to us than dreams of king-

dom come;
 But now that dreamy kingdom is not half so far
 away

Since our's are babes no longer, out there in the
 eager fray.

The pursuing and the doing have given them riper
 grace,
 But nothing in the universe can match a baby's
 face

In kindling love's effulgent flame, where trusting
souls recline,
Or timing heart throbs to the lilt of melody divine.

Oh! a baby's come to our house and a welcome
rogue is he;
He brings the sunshine with him and the robin's
April glee;
His gurgled "google google" and the pursing of his
lips
Call up the fragrant clover blooms from which the
wild bee sips.—

What! going so soon, my fellow? and shall we
frown and say
"The baby's gone from our house and dreary cold's
the day?"
Not so! the spirit lingers still that lit you through
the door
And we shall keep and treasure it till you come
back once more.

L' ENVOI

Oh, baby swans and baby leaves are very fair to
see;
But baby boys and baby girls are earth's best pro-
geny;
So *au revoir*, my bouncing lad, but quickly come
again!
For baby boys, alas! too soon, grow into common
men,

And grown-up folks are like ourselves and very
humdrum things
That bring no sunshine to the house such as a baby
brings.

BERCEUSE

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF NAPOLEON LEGENDRE,
A CANADIAN POET

CHILD with just unfolding mind,—
Little angel happy-eyed,
Rosy dreams about thee twined,
Sleep! My knees thy couch provide.

Like a sweet auroral ray
Purpling in the azure sky,
On thy face serene as day,
Seals of life immortal lie.

Thy sweet eyes with laughter fill
And thy lips for kisses part;
Weepest thou for some slight ill,
Grief yields soon to mother's art.

Sweet, thy life to us is near,
And, to shield thee from alarms,
At the slightest breath of fear,
Quick, to thee extend our arms.

Thus along life's onward way
 If strength fail or friends should fly,
 Or should years and doubts betray,
 May'st thou look for help on high.

Now thy silken eyelids close,
 Little angel happy-eyed,
 Rocked in rosy dreams, repose,—
 Sleep! My knees thy couch provide.

THE SUGAR TROUGH BABY

THE mother smiled on the month-old child
 As she tossed him to and fro;
 Then slily she ~~aid~~ ^{hid} with a wag of the head,
 "Now, ~~papa~~ ^{Daddy}, get out and go
 On a little tramp to the sugar camp
 And hunt us a sugar trough;
 When one you have found with a bottom round,
 Strip all of the old bark off,—
 Ash, poplar or linn, it don't matter a pin,—
 Just bring it right in, be the shell thick or thin,
 To rock the roly-pol' baby in!"

The young sire went with a mind intent
 On finding a leaky trough,
 "It will stand me in stead," to himself he said,
 "To carry no sound one off;
 Though leaky and old, 'twill a baby hold,
 But it won't hold sap so well."

So a cracked trough he bore to the wee cabin door
With a right smooth tale to tell
Her favor to win as he'd tumble it in
On the rude puncheon floor, with satisfied grin,
To rock the roly-pol' baby in.

Round-bottomed, light, it careened all right,
This way, that way, to and fro,
Rockyty rockyty, rockyty rock, with rumble and
knock
Over the puncheons so long ago,
Behaving so rarely and swinging so fairly
On its rounded, barkless side,
That the young wife smiled as she put in the child
To sleep, to swing, and to ride
On a furry wolfskin, with rattle and din,
As she'd knit or she'd spin, with courage to win,
And rock the roly-pol' babe therein.

Whate'er you may say of that pioneer way
Of rocking the baby, hi O,
It was good as the best and had a rude zest
That later day babies can't know.
The mother who spun, as she rocked, thought it fun,
Love made the labor so slight.
The sugar trough boy was a rapture of joy,
The sugar trough girl a delight.
Through thick and through thin, would you have
them to win,
You'd better begin with a trough and wolfskin
To rock your roly-pol' babies in.

CATCHING THE LARK

"When the sky falls we'll catch larks."—*Old Saw.*

DID you ever catch a lark
When the sky fell, boy,
Did you ever catch a lark just then?
If your sky never fell
You've escaped very well,
But you never caught a lark just then.

When, a child, you plead to go
To the rare and rollic show
That would never come for you again;
If your father chanced to frown
All the sky came rushing down,
But you didn't catch your lark just then.

Yes, the sky was very sweet
When at fair Belinda's feet
You went kneeling much as other men;
But you stumbled like a clown,
And your rosy sky came down
And you didn't catch your lark just then.

O, the sky was high and blue,
When your dream of glory flew
To the zenith, but it tumbled when,
Your speculations failed
And your opponents prevailed,
But you didn't catch your lark just then.

Did you ever catch a lark
When the sky fell, boy,
 Did you ever catch a lark just then?
If your sky never fell
You've escaped very well,
 But you never caught a lark just then.

When the sky hung very low
And there was but little glow
 On the mountain or the stream-born glen,
And your pride dissolved in tears,
There came music to your ears
 And the lark lit in your hand just then.

How the bird came, or from where,
You were wholly unaware,
 Or if the sky was falling when
He sought you, heaven sent,
But you named the bird content,
 And his song was in your soul just then.

Did you ever catch a lark
When the sky fell, boy,
 Did you ever catch a lark just then?
If your sky never fell
You've escaped very well,
 But you never caught a lark just then.

LITTLE BOY BLUE IN THE SPRING

"LITTLE Boy Blue, come, blow your horn!"
The robin sings at blush of morn,
The white flower blossoms on the thorn,
The plowed lands wait the seed of corn.

Little Boy Blue, come, leave your sleep,
And join your comrade, sly Bo-Peep,
Who hies away to herd her sheep,
While sluggard dews their couches keep.

Little Boy Blue, bestir, be fleet!
The orchards call, the woods are sweet,
The squirrels run on nimble feet,
And joy and promise lightly greet.

"Good sir, I know not what you say,
I hear the break of buds, the play
Of sap in cells that to the day
Give back the green and gracious ray."

Little Boy Blue, you do but dream,
Wake, wider wake! and catch the gleam
Of sunshine on the laughing stream,
And guess the catbird's happy theme.

So wakened, lad, what dost thou see?
"A spirit in the maple tree,
And note the motions fair and free,
Of spring's unfolding drapery."

Now, broad awake, what hearest thou?
"The oriole singing on the bough,
The milkmaid crooning to her cow,
The farmer whistling at his plow."

Little Boy Blue, hearest thou no more?
"I hear a knocking on the door,
It strikes my heart, it makes it sore;
I ne'er have heard such knocks before."

Little Boy Blue, arise and blow
Thy horn, as ne'er before; and know
That Cupid, with his darts and bow,
Hides at thy door, a stealthy foe.

But if he find thee wise and ware,
And fond of play and shy of care,
He yet thy tender youth may spare
And leave thee free as light and air.

Or if thy soul be nobly wrought
To some design of lofty thought,
Him wilt thou conquer, bring to naught
His wiles, nor perish love-distraught;

For when thy will grows sure and sane,
His arrow's sting shall be thy gain,
And thou shalt lead him, bound in chains
Of roses wound in fadeless skeins.

Little Boy Blue, come, blow and sing
Where vernal bowers are blossoming,
Nor let thy vagrant fancy wing
Too soon from childhood's happy spring.

A SUGAR-MAKING RHYME

O THE singing of the sweetness,
And the sweetness of the song,
At the merry sugar-making
When the days are growing long!
As the boiling sirup bubbles
Into pimples golden-brown,
And the sugar birds are warbling
Where the sap is dripping down;
Where, through paw-paw spiles or elder,
Weep the trees their sweetness out!
For the March is marching onward
And the frogs begin to shout.

Every drop provokes a dimple—
'Round each dimple circles play;
Thus the sap, with laugh and rimple,
Falls to music all the day.
On the elm the robin singeth,
On the oak-top caws the crow;
From tree-stump to fence-stake wingeth
Mating bluebirds chanting low.

But a merrier music ripples
Round the campfire's ruddy glow,
Where the boys and girls a-pulling
Maple wax, as long ago.

LET'S SING AND JOG ALONG

IT seems a little curious, yet there isn't any doubt
But prosp'rous people have more ills than poor
ones know about;
One half their friends are parasites and half the
other half
Would cast them off, should fortune fail, and join
the rabble's laugh;
Wherefore I say, though dark the day and rugged
be the path,
We'd better sing and jog along than stop "to nurse
our wrath,"
We'd better toil and dig the soil than join the
scowling throng—
So ho, my lads! ya ho, my lads! let's sing and jog
along!

This world's a grand and glorious world, as all of
us should know,
And working folks, in common clothes, are they
that make it so;

Theirs are the hands that sow the seed and bring
the harvests in,
And busy brains and toiling hands have little time
for sin.
The groveling greed that mocks at need and scorns
the widow's plea
Is barred from love's fraternity and toil's sublime
degree,
And he whose hand adorns the land can ne'er be
wholly wrong—
So ho, my lads! ya ho, my lads! let's sing and jog
along!

Give golden gain and high renown to men who
lie and scheme,
We'll envy not their joys that pass like specters
in a dream;
But give us health and brawn to toil and love's
benignant grace,
And we will move the world along and jog it on
the race,
The strong gods stand at toil's right hand and
beckon me and you,
And so I say: Command the way, with honest
hearts and true!
Or with the spade, or with the pen 'tis glorious to
be strong;—
So ho, my lads! ya ho, my lads! let's sing and jog
along!

"THE KING IS DEAD! LONG LIVE
THE KING!"

"FAIR ladies, lords, and gentlemen,"
You young folks all give ear!
They're bearing down the shadowed glen
The frail and dying year.
Now doff each hat, bow every head,
And let the pageant pass,
For when the midnight mass is said
The sands will leave the glass,
The last sands leave the glass, but then—
Presto! the sands are back again.

"Fair ladies, lords, and gentlemen,"
Let every heart be bowed;
The old year bids adieu to men,
And dons his sable shroud.
Now lift your youthful voices high
And make the welkin ring:
"The king is dead," as all must die,
"Huzza! Long live the king!"
"Long live the king," and long live we,
And may the world wag merrily!

"Fair ladies, lords, and gentlemen,"
The new year speaks you fair;
There's light within his piercing ken
And in his shining hair.

There's vigor in his onward stride
And glory wreathes his brow.
The wide world greets him, wonder-eyed,
And sings his praises, now
Be yours to gather up the strands
Of hope he strews with lavish hands!

SEEK NOT EVIL

SEEK thou no evil for a friend,
Seek thou no evil for a foe,
Although you give him blow for blow
In honor's cause; but still extend
Some kindly thought till conflicts end;
Thus shall your happiness increase,
And your last days be days of peace.

PATRIOTIC AND MEMORIAL

ONE HUNDRED YEARS

1800-1900

Read before the Western Association of Writers at its fifteenth annual meeting at Winona Lake, Indiana, June 26, 1900.

[NOTE—Indiana Territory was organized in the year 1800, and following that event came the marvelous development and growth of the country west of Ohio, and especially of the States of the Middle West.]

O MARVEL of the world! O hundred years,
Outstretching from the splendor of the dawn,
Far-flashed into the wilderness! O tears
And heart-break, toil and battle, and the drawn,
Wan lips of anguish tossed on beds of pain;
The faith that failed not and the love that
wrought,
And hoped, and dared, and, for the future's gain,
Held sacred its high trust to freedom's holy
thought!

To you I fain would bring such joy of song,
With notes that soar and cadences that fall,
As, for a moment, to the passing throng,
In breath of peaned praises might recall
The story of your triumph; I would wake,
Were mine a hand like his who sought the prize
At Alexander's feast, such strains as break
The bonds of savage hate and lift souls to the
skies.

But turning from forbidden things, I hold
That never century in any clime,
Not even in Astrea's reign of gold,
Or golden fable, made such march sublime
As this our century in Western woods
And o'er the emerald prairies vague and vast,
Where reigned the savage, where the mighty floods
Held all the wild land in their fluvian arms en-
clasped.

For here, when Freedom's flag of stars unfurled,
Began to float where strong hands made a way,
A little way into the untamed world
Of woods and waters, there flashed in a ray,
A flame auroral, that should light the pall
Of savage darkness, and break in and shine
Athwart the wilderness, enraying all,
And leading ever on to conquests more benign.

And so the thronging hosts of pioneers,
Strong-armed, strong-willed, came with the flag
and made
The new soil richer with their blood and tears,
And planted states, or drew the battle blade
Against their country's foes, at freedom's cry,
Till now this mighty empire of the free,
This granary of the world lifts to the sky
Its millions of unfettered hands rejoicingly.

The tangled copse and fever-breeding marsh
Gave place to fruitful field and smiling town,

And cities rose, and babel-babblings harsh
Of noisy traffic seemed intent to drown
All gentler voices, until learning came
And science delved, and culture's daughter, Art,
Smiled radiantly as Phosphor's morning flame
To gladden life and even glorify the mart.

Great commonwealths, upon the parent stem,
Bloomed as the first, 'till all the valley smiled,
And sent its children west, to bear with them
The seed of freedom to each newer wild,
'Till crossing arid waste and mountain chain,
And pressing forward toward the setting sun,
They planted states beside the Western Main,
Nor yet have paused to count their many vict'ries
won.

The new land brought forth statesmen wisely great,
Heroes who wrought, alike, in war and peace,
Upheld the Union and conserved the State;
For truth and justice, liberty's increase
Poured their best blood out on a hundred fields,
That loyal Lincoln might make millions free,
And with the power that youth and genius wields
Healed every wounded bough on freedom's grow-
ing tree.

Now fire and steam and air our servants are,
And that dread fluid Franklin first drew down
From summer clouds repeateth, free and far,
Our thoughts and voices, while from farm and
town

One long, loud pean rises to the skies
Of thankful praise for all our sires have done,
For mothers who to labor's high emprise
Gave faith to sanctify and love for benizon.

O marvel of the world! O hundred years!
Whose sunset splendor fades along the west.
Your children still press forward and earth hears
Their cry of "Onward!" as each loyal breast
Swells high with hope for conquests greater far,
And brother cries to brother "lo, the dawn!"
The age of progress rises like a star,
A star, a sun, to speed the glory on and on.

But sweetly still the music of the past
Rings in old ears, and in old eyes the light
Of other days shall linger to the last
And old dreams tarry on their latest flight.
They knew the story of th' embattled trees
That stood like hosts of giants, unappalled
To face the settlers, heard the fitful breeze
Sing round the cabin in its niche green-walled.

All honor be to them! And hist'ry's muse
Shall not neglect them in the greater day
That hastens on, nor yet shall art refuse
On speaking canvass, or in plastic clay,
In bronze or marble, to repeat the tale
Of those who won here, on this fruitful soil
Such vict'ries as o'er death and time prevail,
The heaven-born rights of man, the dignity of
toil.

O mighty land! sprung from the wilderness,
As great Minerva from the strong god's brow!
O marvel of the world! to ban or bless,
The future lieth full before thee now;
As thine own eagle, Jove's imperial bird,
Strong-winged, well-poised, sustains his sunward
flight,
So be thy course on high; though oft deferred,
Still keep thy hope and faith linked to the death-
less right!

LAFAYETTE

He was ruled by two passions—the one for his wife, the other for freedom: and the latter was the stronger of the two. In his amorous pursuit of liberty under all her protean forms—a pursuit sometimes stern, always sanguine, and maintained through a long life—he has never been rivaled, unless it be by Mr. Gladstone, in our day.—*Miss Edith Sichel's "The Household of Lafayette."*

NOW, who is he that being in love with love,
With understanding and a faithful heart,
Walks not with freedom, as the strong gods move,
Nor counts her service love's diviner art?

For love were but a base and selfish thing,
Lust of the flesh, or of degraded souls
A mean ambition, if it dared not fling
Its own red heart on freedom's altar coals.

The peerless Frenchman loved and loving wrought
For love and freedom, which in truth are one,
In that last sacred synthesis of thought
When motive ripens and great deeds are done.

America the grateful, though, perchance
Oblivious of her own, shall ne'er forget
The golden *fleur-de-lis* of friendly France
Nor the great soul of youthful Lafayette,—

The soul of love and liberty, the soul
Of hero faith that flung itself all bare
Into the breach when freedom's martial roll
Seemed but the echo of an old despair;—

The old despair of liberty that wailed
Above Athena's dead democracy,
Or when proud Rome's republic, sick'ning, paled
And to brute despots bent the cringing knee.

He whom great Webster praised, Beranger sang
And all America and freedom's own
From every clime, hailed with the tocsin's clang
And booming guns and bugles blithely blown,

When, youth no longer smiling on his brow,
He came to bask again in freedom's sun,
Needs not the praise of any minstrel now—
His fame secure, his fadeless glory won.

O marvelous *fleur-de-lis* of sunny France,
May thy fair petals open ever more
In freedom's radiance and no dark mischance
Sow tares and nettles on the Gallic shore!

No more may Paris run with patriot blood
While murder flaunts the name of liberty
To sanctify her crimes, a foetid flood
That shipwrecks hope and drowns the *fleur-de-lis*!

But whatsoe'er betide thee, sunny land,
One name of thine is on our temple traced,
One statue in love's sacred niche shall stand
Till temple, love and niche shall be effaced.

The name is his who, lonely, crossed the main
And waked the wrath of many a little king;
The form is his who broke the galling chain
As France's nightingale rejoiced to sing.*

Belittle him who may, in freedom's clime
The radiance of his star shall never set;
Like those great lights that measure space and time
Shall glow for aye the name of Lafayette.

*De Beranger.

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

(Nov. 24, A. D. 1898.)

THE nation bows before Thee, O Lord of the
shore and sea!
Of suns and constellations and systems yet to be;
God of the mighty universe and Lord of the guid-
ing hand,
Of the primal cell and the sprouting grass, bless
Thou the waiting land!

We pray Thee bless the silences that fall with
healing breath
Where late the surly cannon were hot with hate
and death,
And over the ghastly trenches where fallen heroes
sleep,
Plant Thou the seeds of hope and love and solace
those that weep;

And grant that all our victories and the glory of
our ships
Hold not the nation's righteousness in the thrall
of a blind eclipse
Till we shall pray as the Pharisee with bold, as-
sertive phrase,
Or put our pride in the Master's place and yield to
it our praise.

And grant us, Lord, the grace to bring to the
islands in the sea
The sweeter hope and the larger life that are born
of liberty;
And grant, we pray, that our helping hand shall a
helping hand remain,
And never grow heavy at greed's command to weld
the oppressor's chain.

And now from liberty's chosen land, where only
the people reign,
Remove, O Lord, the pride and hate and the love
of evil gain
That hunt the negro to his death and the poor man
to the cell,
And kindle the fires of anarchy where plenty and
peace should dwell.

We thank Thee, gracious Lord of all, for the
blessed things that be;
For the life and light that free thought brings to
make the people free;
For the will to heed a neighbor's need, or defend
his righteous cause,
And the grace to write on freedom's chart the
codes of wiser laws.

And thus, O Lord, with prayer and praise we end
the rolling year,
And lift our waiting hearts to Thee and feel Thy
presence near

In every loving heart that stands with outstretched
arms to Thee,
In the negro's hut, in the rich man's home, in the
islands of the sea.

AFTER DECORATION

THE OLD MAN SPEAKS

THE Decoration is over, mother,
And the flowers wilt in the sun
As the daisies did in the long swathes hid,
That haying of sixty-one.
Our sad thought goes with lily and rose
That fade by the graves and die—
Bruised and beat by the hurrying feet
Of the crowds that wander by.

All bruised and broken our hearts were, mother,
Like the grass and blossoms today;
For he was so lithe, so bonnie and blythe
The morning he went away,
With a smile and sigh, a tear in his eye,
On his lips some words of cheer;
And oh, so soon, in the heart of June,
We brought him and laid him here!

We, dreaming of peace when there was no peace,
And the war cloud thund'ring nigh,
Still held him in fee, till the bugle's glee
Rang out and the flag went by,—

The flag went past and he followed fast,
For his soul went on before,—
'Twas so long ago that we laid him low,
So long—and our hearts still sore!

We have missed his help in the fields, mother,
And his morning smile at the door;
We have missed him long from the cherished
throng
And the chair that he fills no more.
A letter or two and a scrap of blue,
And a lock of his raven hair,
And the tale is told of the things we hold
From the life we used to share.

Nay, mother, there's more in a safer store;
'Tis a throne in the room of gold
And a prince thereon, with the light of dawn,
On a face of royal mold.
And this knightly Roi is our soldier boy,
And his throne room bideth fair
In memory's bower in the castle tower
That defieth age and care.

There were thousands of sons like ours, mother,
Who rallied to freedom's call,
And to make men free were as brave; but he—
He was our dearest of all;
And so when they come with the throbbing drum,
Children and flags and flowers,
Our lives fall back over time's dim track
To that first great grief of ours.

Oh! long shall be wrought to the hero thought,
To the love that is love alway,
Wreathed blossom and bloom for our soldier's
tomb;
But we shall be far away
Where the snow-white rose in paradise grows
That mothers of heroes wear;
That rose may be thine, but there's nothing fine
I want but our boy up there.

McKINLEY

O BRAVE of soul and true and strong,
Yet tender as a mother's heart,
He stood amidst the crowding throng
Of men and nations, bore his part
Among great rulers of great lands,
Humbly as one who only serves—
Honoring the service—from whose hands
Far speeding on the quickened nerves
Of freedom's millions, runs a thrill
Of love fraternal, swift to bind
Race unto kindred race and fill
And unify the common mind
For common good, till those, who, far away,
Sit in the darkness, rise and greet the day.

A shining mark for that wild rage
Of anarchy that gluts its maw
With patriot's blood, and mars the page
That bears of liberty the law,
With brutal passion's godless creed,
Was he, the wise and gently great,
Who, high of faith and bold of deed,
Wrought for his country, tempting fate
And scorning malice with love's scorn;
Forgiving those who naught forgave,
With face uplifted to the morn
And far more glad to give than have—
For he tempts fate the most who most for man
Himself exposes to the wrath of clan.

McKinley, honor's crown is thine,
And glory sets thy star on high,
With freedom's fadeless stars to shine
In love's illimitable sky!
No mean assassin's coward shot
May harm thee in the halls of fame,
No foul aspersion leave one blot
To dim the radiance of thy name;
Thy place is with the immortal great
Of every clime and race; thy sun,
Though set, still marks high noon, thy fate
Men mourn, but say, "God's will be done!"
God's will be done in anarchy's surcease,
In law's survival, liberty's increase.

ON THE PROSPECT OF PEACE

WAR is a demon of doubt and death,
Filling the world with its poison breath.
But peace is an angel that soars and sings
And hovers on sweet, benevolent wings,
And peace is the substance of happy things.
Joy! Joy!
Peace is the substance of happy things.

War is a wrecker of homes and hearts,
Cruel as hell are its deadly arts.
But peace is a spirit with eyes to see
The bountiful, beautiful years to be
When love shall be mistress of land and sea:
Joy! Joy!
Love shall be mistress of land and sea.

Ring the glad bells when the war is done!
Shout, as the rust assails saber and gun,
And down on the pinions of love and praise,
Where the slain are sorrow to him that slays,
Peace cometh again to renew her days;
Joy! Joy!
Cometh again to renew her days.

ADOLPH THUT*

FROM SWITZERLAND, 1861-1904

(Decoration Day, May 30, 1904.)

HELKETIA'S sons, in freedom's cause,
Were ever quick to strike or bleed;
Her Tell, who won the world's applause,
Her martyr, Arnold Winkelried;
Her men in Unterwalden vale
Who backward hurled the Austrian tide;
Her modern heroes who prevail,
O'er Europe's fierce imperial pride,
Maintaining still the people's rights
Secure among their mountain heights.

And there was one, a friend of mine,
A comely youth from Switzerland,
His soul aflame with fire divine;
Of generous heart and open hand,
Who heard the bugle's pleading call
When from her sorrowing soul's excess
Of deadly peril, soon to fall
Upon her in her nakedness,
Imperilled freedom cried afar
For men to fill the ranks of war.

*Pronounced Thoot.

How readily he joined the ranks
For this, his second Switzerland,
And sought no honors, titles, thanks;
But simply for the right to stand:
How cheerily he marched and sang,
Or bore a fainting comrade's pack,
Or while the camp with murmurs rang
Wrote jolly, hopeful letters back
To friends at home, a few remain
Who know, and count the knowledge gain.

He shared in Shiloh's bloody fight
And passed, unwounded, through the fray,
And, with long rows of dead in sight,
Wrote home the tale of that sad day,
Then turned to care for wounded men,
And toiled for days where mercy led,
And there contagion seized him when
His hand wrought most for those who bled,
And he, who fain in battle's van
Had fallen, died a plague-struck man.

We brought him home. In sylvan shade
We laid his mortal body down,
Where wild birds sang and blossoms made
The summer sweet. And now, from town,
When gray men come with wreath and bloom,
Or children pass with flags in hand,
They decorate the humble tomb
Of Adolph Thut from Switzerland,
There in his sylvan, sweet repose,
Remember him with wreath and rose.

Oh, warm and true the kindly heart
Which beat in that young Switzer's breast!
He chose with freedom's own his part
And loved her rural children best.
Though widely taught in Europe's schools,
He turned with open mind to ours,
And, while a stranger to our rules,
Submitted to the peaceful powers
Where women teach and women rule
And sail the pleasant ship of school.

Because he longed for wider range
Than his beloved valley gave,
And dreamed of regions new and strange,
Where maids are fair and men are brave;
Because he loved the cheerful farm
And rustic toils and rural ways,
He fled from a profession's charm—
If charm it hath—to spend his days
In this fair, growing, hopeful west,
Upon the farm—of dreams his best.

He came to us for peace, found war
And shrank not from it, so he died
For freedom; died for us and for
The world's wide future. Eagle-eyed
And hopeful—from his own afar—
He gave himself for strangers, yet
He first had won our love. No bar
Of time can make our souls forget
Our gallant Swiss boy, loyal, brave,
Asleep there in his lowly grave.

MAURICE THOMPSON

O MANY-STRINGED and marv'lous lute,
Whose chords his lightest breath could sway,
Since thy great Master lieth mute
With naught his prophet lips may say—

How fares he now men call him dead,
Who left earth's happiness to know
The springs of joy, by wisdom fed,
That flow with ever-deep'ning flow?

And thou, low-lying, cold and still,
Whose fingers straying o'er the wires
Of song's immortal harp could thrill
The soul with love's celestial fires,

Know'st thou, though heads are bowed in grief
And hearts are bleeding now for thee,
That many an old and sweet belief
Sings to them through the melody

Of some remembered song of thine,
That, like a far prophetic voice,
Fore-sings the perfect song, divine,
And bids the sorrowing soul rejoice,—

Rejoice for one who lived his days
So blamelessly and wrought so well
And loved so greatly that his lays
Renewed love's moving miracle?

And now, O friend, "Hail and farewell!"
In heaven howe'er thy stature grow,
While we mid sun and shadows dwell,
To thy old self our love shall flow.

COATES KINNEY

"KINNEY is dead!" Far-called the speaking
wires

On that sad day when passed his lofty soul;
But he lives on, so brightly burn the fires
He kindled ere fame wove her aureole
For his clear brow, or bowed her stately head
Before his splendid majesty of song:
While many mourn the mortal man as dead,
The wiser few his virile strains prolong.

Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier, Lowell,—four,—
Add Kinney,—five—and fill the shining scroll*
Of our great bards who learned to sing and soar
E'er civil war had called its martial roll
Or poured its red libations for our sins.
He lingered latest, singing to the last
With such full utterance as the strong soul wins
When mighty issues in the molds are cast,—

*Coates Kinney was less prolific and more chary of publication than either of the four great New England poets; but a careful and unbiased study of his verse will certainly reveal that in quality much of his poetry measures up to their best.

The mold of seething thought, the mold of war,
Of freedom's progress, of a nation's fate,
When man contends with man, as Zeus with Thor
Might have contended in some mythic state.
He sang of love, the future hope of man,—
An endless progress from this mortal strife,
Eternity from time's contracted span,
And death transmuted into radiant life;

Then, in his singing robes, he took his flight
Into the silence as into the dawn,
And, we who heard him singing through the night,
Still hear his numbers ringing on and on.

WILL CUMBACK

CHILD of the free and open mind,
Who loved so generously thy kind,
And revelled in life's ardent flow,
The morning's rapture, evening's glow,—
Holding thy friends as something more
Than shadows on a barren shore—
And wrought for man so long and well,
Why hast thou fled our Israel,—
Favored of nature, blest of art;—
As one who journeys far apart
From kith and kin, why wand'rest thou
From thy home land of here and now?

O, brother mine! thy paradise
Was here at home among thy friends:
Is it but transferred to the skies
Where no grief comes, no rapture ends?
A soft voice answers, "Even so,
To bliss above, from bliss below,
He journeys far, but you that stay
Behind him for a month, a day,
A half score years, perchance, may know
That where he goeth you shall go."

Though he may never more return,
With great, warm heart and ringing speech
To solace sorrowing souls that yearn;
To please, convince, inspire or teach,
Or send mirth's happy, jovial sound
The friendly banquet's table round,
His spirit, haunting mem'ry's bower,
Shall gladden many a sombre hour
When skies are sullen, winters grim,
As, faring on, we go to him.

W. E.

A MAN WHO FOLLOWED HIS CONVICTIONS OF
RIGHT AND DUTY

A STRONG man has fallen,
A true man from us gone;
A brave man passed, calling
To his fellow-men "On!"

His Master he followed,
To his praise be it said,
On the highway of faith,
Where his own conscience led.

For salvation of man
He contended with men,
Dared to differ with friends,
As one lone man to ten,

And seriously sober,
Unselfishly wrought
For pure lives, happy homes
And love-sanctified thought.

O! naught that is greater
May a mortal man do
Than, in love, the way marked
By his conscience pursue.

So he followed his light,
Thus he lived out his day:
May grass grow and rose bloom
Long and well o'er his clay!

His Lord home has called him,
And, in hope, we may cry
To his soul, onward marching,
Au revoir! NOT good-bye!

HER POOR, THIN HANDS

[An aged pioneer and minister of the gospel who had been a farmer, and, with his wife, in their youthful days, experienced the exacting toils of farm and home building in the wilderness, said to a friend, one day during her last illness, "I take her poor, thin hands in mine and think how hard, yet cheerfully, they have toiled for me, and it almost breaks my heart.]

I TAKE her poor, thin hands in mine,
And think how gladly through the years,
They toiled for me and made no sign
Of quick impatience; and the tears
Rise to my eyes and I can see,
As thought runs back on time's dead sands,
How well they wrought for love and me;—
Her saintly hands, her fair, white hands!—

Dear, winsome hands! Dear, eager hands!
O, swiftly sure in life's young morn,
You joined with mine where new, brown lands
Were waiting for the seed of corn.
With home to build and fields to clear,
And sums to solve at love's commands,
You shirked no toil, nor counselled fear,
O, strong, yet fair, caressing hands!

A woman's hands, a wife's dear hands!
Directed by a wife's fond heart,
The gray-haired husband understands
How loyally they've done their part.

He knows, beyond what tongue may speak
How, more than triple iron bands,
They've held his soul from sin—those weak,
Yet brave, determined, helping hands.

O, beautiful in perfect mold,
These poor, thin hands were long ago;
And yet today they have and hold
More that is fair to me, I know,
Than e'er before, or so it seems.
Youth gave the buds, but age expands
Love's harvests in the sunset gleams
That glorify these thin, white hands.

O, God! I pray Thee once again,
Rain blessings down on her dear head,
And hold these hands, that suffer pain,
In Thine own hand, as when we wed
In life's young morn and vowed to Thee—
Our lives, our loves, our herds and lands,
All that we were, or hoped to be—
My own strong arms and her fair hands.

I praise Thee, Lord, for many gifts
Thy gracious bounty doth provide;
But, as each passing shadow lifts,
Far more for her, my youth's fair bride—
Fairer today—than aught save love,
Thy love, that over all expands,
And bids me hope in heaven above
To hold again her precious hands.



E. Stein

Now on the dead tree's hollow bole
The gay woodpecker plies his bill,
And "rat tat tat" his martial roll
Rings bravely over field and hill;
His quaint call echoes loudly now,
And now he rides the waves of light,
A swinging dory, whose red prow
Tilts up and down in zig-zag flight.

NONSENSE AND DIALECT

THE WORM AND THE WOODPECKER

A WOODPECKER pecked on a hickory limb,
And a chuckle-head worm hurried out,
For a strange curiosity whispered to him:
"Go 'n' see what that fool bird's about."

Alas, for the folly that takes for a fool
Every creature it don't comprehend,
For it brings, in this world, I am told, as a rule,
A full peck of woe in the end.

THE WOODPECKER'S LITTLE GAME

Another version

THE woodpecker drums on the mulberry limb,
"Rat-ta-tat-tat! Rat-ta-tat-tat!"
And the chuckle-head worm, as he listens to him,
Says, "What's he at? What is he at?"
Then he wriggles out through the bark to see,
Rat-ta-tat-tat! Rat-ta-tat-tat!
And the woodpecker gobbles him up with glee,
And flyeth away to another tree,
Where another fool worm will wish to see
What he is at with his "rat-ta-tat-tat!"

GRAN'PA

MY ma say, one day to me:
"W'en we get's old as gran'pa, we
May be crippled an' worthless as he."
'Least that's w'at I telled gran'pa;
Nen he jes shooked, worst I ever saw,
An' cried. Nen I fink some, an' say:
"Gran'pa, I dess 'twant dat way,
W'at my ma say; she say: 'Ef we
Get's old as gran'pa we'll be helpless as he.'
That's diffunt, gran'pa, diffunt as can be!"
Nen gran'pa he laugh an' rattle his crutch,
An' he say: "Not much, my chile, not much!"

OLE MAN PENNY PACKER

OLE man Penny Packer,
He chews terbacker
An' he smokes a pipe an' eats snuff:
Seems like he can't get enough
Terbacker, an' it jes runs in streaks
Down his beard an' paints his cheeks
All brown an' yellor.
He's a cross ole feller,
An' he don't smell sweet;
'Spect he's purt' nigh smoked meat!

SOME LITTLE FOLKS

THE very least little boy ever I knew
Was so little he rocked in his grandmother's
shoe;
And he gurgled "goo goo!
Pray, what shall I do,
But suck my thumb blue
And rock the day through in my grandmother's
shoe?"

The we-est of wee girls I ever did see,
She swung in an oriole's nest on a tree,
And she said: "Look at me!
It's nice as can be
To see-saw and saw-see
And swing in an oriole's nest on a tree."

The smallest old man in the world, I suppose,
Is the little old chap who lays down for a doze
With his head on his toes
And his toes in his nose,
While he cuddles so close
That there's nobody knows his bald head from his
toes.

The tiniest old woman the world ever saw
Was that little old gentleman's mother-in-law;
Loud she cackled: "Ha, ha,
I'm a mother-in-law,
Proud as ever you saw
And my home is a polly-pod's pod, ha ha!"

RAFFERTY GREEN'S GREAT HEART

RAFFERTY GREEN was the rarest man!
Rafferty Green, Rafferty Green!
His great heart grew on the onion plan,—
The center good as ever was seen,
Which soon another layer bound,
And another layer cased it round
While others, succeeding others, found
Room to grow sweeter and crisper, too,
Than even the core had dared to do;
Then others and others, all good and sound,
Kept making the heart of old Rafferty Green
Greater than it before had been,
Till winey wags, when gay and mellow,
Sang "Rafferty Green's a jolly good fellow!"
And a "jolly good fellow" in truth was he
As ever you saw, or ever you'll see.

But alas, alas! 'tis a bitter fate
That a good thing, even, may grow too great;
So Rafferty Green laid down and died,
And the neighbors came and looked and sighed,
For the outer layer of his old, brown skin
Barely covered the heart within,
And the wise, old doctor, with nodding head,
In learned lingo discoursed and said:

"Alium cepa cardium est

Causa primus of this man's rest."

ROSS MARTIN'S HOSS

BOSS Ross Martin hed an' ole fool hoss,
One eye knocked out an' de yuther one blin';
Ringbone an' spavin made de ole hoss cross,
Nen de ole hoss got wrong in his min',
An' he'd think criss-cross 'cause he couldn't see
Ross;

Nen w'en Ross were drivin' de hoss 'long de road
His cross-criss thinker got to goin' criss-cross,
Twel he were Ross an' de hoss were de load;
Nen de ole hoss whinney like he gwine ter laugh
An' won't pull no more,—he's de boss not hoss—
He back up de buggy an' snap off de shaf'

'Cause he think 'at he's ridin' an' whippin'-up
Ross,
Twel buggy, Ross an' hoss all rolled, criss-cross,
Off bridge, an' nen—they'd a fun'ral for Ross.

CA-I-PHAS

IGIN de lad er Scriptah name
To lif' 'im up an' bring 'im fame,
An' now he's jes about de same,—
Ez full er tricks, ez fon' er game
Ez any common niggah;
But someway, I's jes stuck to deaf,
Soul an' body, haht an' bref,
Till dere is mos' nuffin' er me lef'
But jes love er de boy heself,
Ez fuh ez I can figgah;

Dis winsome boy, Ca-i-phas!
Dis dancin', laughin', singin' lad,
Dis Jubah-pattin', go-show-mad
Mockin' bird dat makes me glad,
 Dis honey-bee, Ca-i-phas!
 Ca-i-phas, oh, Ca-i-phas!
 De jub'lee lad, Ca-i-phas!
Dis red-co' watahmillion chile
Dat show his white teef w'en he smile,
 Dis coal-black swan, Ca-i-phas!

I'se 'fraid he's nebah gwine ter reach
De solemncolly grace ter preach
De gospil, er ter even teach
De piccaroons de propah speech;
 Dis rompin', cairless niggah!
I'd mos' jump right up to de skies
Ter see 'im jes once lookin' wise,
An' hear 'im sortah solemnize
His darkey titter, lak he'll s'prise
 His ma, w'en he gets biggah;
Dis mamma-boy, Ca-i-phas!
Dis long-leg, banjo-pickin' coon,
What dance all night an' sleep at noon,
Dis bunch er quills brim full er tune,
 Dis idle-wind Ca-i-phas!
 Ca-i-phas, oh, Ca-i-phas!
 Black buttahfly, Ca-i-phas!
Dis greedy, apple-dumplin' lout
What tu'ns my ole haht inside out,
 Dis angel-voiced Ca-i-phas!

JES' SO LAZY

JES let me hev my big, ahm chaiah
Wid de rockahs on, w'en de sky am faiah,
Out en de shade en de summah time,
W'en de bee's en de blossom an' de goa'd-vine
climb;

Er befo' de fiah w'en de win' gwine blow
An' de momicle in de merc'ry's low
An' I kin doze an' nod an' be
Ez happy ez er coon en a hollah tree,—

Ercause I's jes so lazy;

So lazy, O, so lazy!

Den de days run pas'

Like shaddahs on de grass,

An' I jes soaks en lazy.

Now Dinah nebbah will unnerstan'
W'at lazy means to er lazy man,
She's er hustlin' ooman w'at keeps things neat,
An' close to weah an' things to eat;
But she 'sturbs me; wants me bring her tub
An' fetch de watah an' hope her rub,
Put out de washin' an' do de chores;
How I gwine heah, w'en I nods an' snores,

Ercause I's jes so lazy?

So lazy, O, so lazy!

De possum dream in de ole gum log
An' pays no 'tention to de barkin' dog,
But cuirls up still an' lazy.

Dat noxious Dinah am jes de beat!
She says, "Yo'll work or yo' shant eat!"
How I gwine work w'en de win' gwine blow
Or de sun gwine shine, er hit rain er snow;
Ef de noon's too hot, er de mornin' cool?
Dinah mus'n't tek me foh nobody's fool,
An' de ole rockin' chaiah he says, says he,
"Set down, ole man, an' snooze wid me,
 Ercause yo's jes' so lazy,
 So lazy, O, so lazy!
Nebbah yo' min' w'at dat niggah say,
An' she'll fotch de dinnah roun' yo' way
 Ef yo'll jes' cling to lazy!"

MISCELLANEOUS VERSE

DEATH SONG OF THE UNSATISFIED

[When these stanzas were written, at a time when wild theories, revolutionary vagaries and corporate greed seemed even more immediately to threaten the peace and happiness of the country than at present, they were credited to that class of thinkers who believe themselves and their theories to be neglected and forgotten. This was done because those who assume that attitude are prone to exaggerate the real or imaginary evils of the present. The serious purpose of the lines, however, lies in their contention that no social, political, nor economical panacea or nostrum can, by its enactment into law, make a people prosperous and happy, nor supersede character, individual, state and racial, in the wise government of the world.]

LET us depart for so it seemeth well:
To us the hosts of the forgotten call;
And wheresoe'er their shades may rove or dwell
From human thought exiled, forgotten all,
We pass to join them in their lost estate
And share their joy or mingle in their grief,—
We who have striven so long and fall so late,
And find, at last, our longest day too brief.

We tempted fate upon her hardest side
And strove at once for mercy and for art;
We wept when truth was scourged and crucified,
Or felt the pangs that rent a brother's heart;

And so we fell and failure sealed our lips,
And wrote across our aching brows her name,
Then bore us gently on her finger tips
Far from the noisy rabble's wild acclaim.

But, ere we came, we heard the demagogue,
Who, tossing comets o'er the galaxy,
And raging ever like the three-mouthed dog,
Raves at old order, roars of things to be:
And him the people heartened with great noise,
As he proclaimed all history a lie
And hist'ry's muse a vixen with coarse voice,
And nothing true of all but anarchy;

And so we came, at last unto the place
Where now we wait, and, waiting hear the cry
Of the forgotten dead, that call through space
To the forgotten who are yet to die;
And here we paused, and here we laughed and sung
As though the world were happy, joy our own,
And here, the heart directing still the tongue,
Has given our notes the morning's mellow tone;

For the forgotten loves as well his lay
As loves the butterfly his gaudy wing,
And here, where failure bears her gentle sway,
There's naught for us to do but dream and sing.
Back among men who are remembered still,
Resounds the clash of arms, the rage and stress
Where ancient good contends with modern ill,
And ancient ill parades in modern dress.

The alchemyst's old bubbles, blown afar,
 Across the centuries, are hailed again
As new discoveries, and the argent star
 Outshines the sun to youth's dilated ken,
And men run clamoring for a trick of law
 To make the tinker's pewter more than gold,
Make thorns bear figs, and brambles grapes, or
 draw
Plenty's millennium from the coiner's mold.

Pale science sits beside her midnight lamp
 And proves the demagogue a Janus still;
But list the roar from yonder mighty camp,
 Where ignorance asserts her solemn will!
Men fall before him there and kiss his feet
 And speed him as their new-found Spartacus,—
For to the living humbug is so sweet,
 Were humbug dead they soon would come to us.

So let the living wrangle out their days,
 The unforgotten strut across the stage,
Machinery and mules produce the plays
 That once taxed Shakespeare's art and Garrick's
 rage;
Society rhymers, in sweet swallowtails,
 In ices flavored up to scandal's taste
Deal out such song as in their world prevails
 With shoddy, purples, diamonds of paste.

No more, O friends, with them may we contend;
 It were unseemly for our ancient trills
To vex the air in which their voices blend
 Ground smooth and fine on their scholastic mills.

Now poetry is wrought on diagrams,
Light on the circle, heavy on the square,
And where our ancient critics hurled their "damns!"
These moderns plumb and measure and despair.

The learned professor talks and talks and talks,
Then talks some more and thinks he runs the
age;
But the grim delegate who walks and walks,
Knows that the earth is his fat heritage;
Yet capital holds him in sure control,
Laughs at his rage and pacifies the mob;
Old common sense seems dead as any sole
That ever felt the sea's tumultuous throb.

Now graceless greed comes in with swollen pride,
A blind sow gorging on the unctuous swill,
With her large farrow ever at her side,
Sired by "Great Lust of Gain" and for their fill
Contending each with each 'till one, more wise
Than all the others, thus suggests a Trust:
"Let's form a stomach of sufficient size
And all the world's good things into it thrust."

And lo! the cheated masses bow assent
Till public robbery wears a smiling face,
And many people hail the great event,
As Greed uplifted in the market place
On golden pedestal, with song and shout,
Commands men's worship with the dollar mark
She bears *en tablet* on her hideous snout,
While virtue hides her sorrows in the dark.

And thus they drift, while toiling science waves
Her marv'ous lamp above their puny bands:
Earth, water, lightning; light, heat, air, as slaves,
Are swift to execute her strange commands:
The elements are chained for many a need,
And things grow cheap and cheapen many men,
Who crush each other in their cruel greed,
Or rend their hair and rave with voice and pen

For government to seize all things and stand
The one sole arbiter of human fate,
To sink ambition in the common sand,
Make all men small and all of equal weight.
Have they forgotten Jehovah and his law
Which made each soul the monarch of its own,
That thus they seek to cast in one great maw,
Hungrier than hell and wider than its zone,

All good, all ill, all hope and happiness,
All individual effort, thought and skill,
All powers that ban, all energies that bless,
And make them subject to its one strong will?
Have they forgotten the Christ who taught men
love
And brotherhood and purity of heart,—
The individual soul, whose strength may move
Mountains for good and hallow every art,

When thus they dream and murmur and conspire
To sink the man and bring the despot in,
And smother down the old Promethean fire
That flames wherever men aspire and win?

Let them forget, if so forget they must,
But the forgotten never can forget;
We lived when hope ran tingling through our dust
And stars shone fairest when the sun was set,

And though with all forgotten things we pass,
We pass as individuals, one by one,
Not crammed and molded in some pasty mass
By force so blind it sees and cares for none.
All evolutions, all estates were ours:
From dust of stars, from protoplasmic cells,
From all that was before us came our powers,
The will that wields, the wisdom that compels;

By these we rose, and God forgetteth not,
Nor nature, nor the protean soul of man
That lives for æons; men may scheme and plot,
But still one purpose runs through all life's plan;
We may not guess its scope nor read its signs
Wisely or well, as in our blinding flight,
We speed like couriers down the battle lines
Where darkness strives forever with the light.

Of this, at least, the humblest may be sure
And with it the forgotten die content,
Only the true and wholesome shall endure,
And beauty's dower was never vainly spent,
While art that gently leads to nature's soul,
Down to her germs and upward to her God,
Shall come into her own as ages roll,
As dreamers dream and patient toilers plod.

Let us depart! for us there breathes not now
The grateful fragrance of the spicy dawn,
When the fresh earth, that opens to the plow,
Speaks the full harvest. After we have gone
There shall be birds and blossoms and good cheer
As we have known them, and the great world
move
From its brief madness and full sane and clear
The mind of man shall seek the heart of love.

We are forgotten! better thus to be
Than to be hated into deathless fame!
With us shall sleep love's greater progeny,—
Wisdom too wise to seek an earthly name,
Grace that would shrink from glory's brazen gaze,
And virtue that would never soil its wings
For all the splendors of earth's splendid days,
The joys of conqu'rors or the crowns of kings.

Let us be gone! for so it seemeth best,
Since times are changed and men are changed
and all
Love's many voices call us to our rest,
For the forgotten nothing shall recall
Back to the poignancy of joy or pain,
And we who toiled so long and fall so late,
Lone stragglers, lost upon the battle plain,
Pause now no more to rail at men or fate.

DOWN THE RIVER

EVALYN'S SONG OF FAITH

THE river is wide and deep
And flows with a ceaseless flow,—
With a mighty swell and sweep
That grow as the great floods grow;
Yet once, to its fountain head,
I came, on a far-gone day,
Where it crept, a silv'ry thread,
Through mosses and laughed away.

And they launched my little boat
On a ripple of the rill,
When a cry rose from my throat
Like an insect's wailing shrill;
But a smile of morning lay
On the prow of the tiny shell,
And the lark, at break of day,
Sang "Sailor, you're sailing well!"

Now whisp'ring reeds by the shore
Are higher than meadow grass,
And the meadow moths no more
Fly over us as we pass
Where King Fisher woos his bride
And plumeth his shining crest,
By swamps where the lithe snakes glide
And the great heron builds her nest.

The river leads on, I know,
 To a vague and unknown sea,
And I may not choose, but go
 Where its swift wave beareth me;
Yet back at its primal springs,
 Where the mint and mallow bloom,
I have felt the stir of wings
 That bear the sweet haw's perfume.

The drone of the summer bee,
 The fragrance that new hay yields
Come down the wide stream to me
 From the far-off harvest fields;
But the old, sweet days are gone,
 And the river bears my boat,
To the salt tides, faring on,
 Of the chartless seas remote.

My boat is the frailest shell,
 And the waves are dark and cold
And never were words to tell
 The mysteries that they hold,—
The sorrow, the bliss, the pain
 Of things that are and to be
When I shall cry out in vain
 To shore from a shoreless sea.

Oh! never shall I return
 To the wild rose and the thorn,
Where the wahoo blossoms burn
 And the robin sings at morn;

Yet the wild-rose-odor clings
And is of my being part,
And the long-dead robin sings
With the rapture in my heart.

And ever I dream and float
On the river wide and deep,
And rock in my fragile boat
And sing and laugh and sleep;
While the vistas open wide
And the misty azure lies
Athwart the shore and the tide
Like a vale of paradise;

For the helm a pilot holds,
And the tiller him obeys
Through the mystery that enfolds
And the doubts of weary days;
And the fragrance of his breath
Is sweet as the morning air,
And he sings "there is no death
On the wave nor anywhere."

He upholds the sinking heart
As the boat and waters move,
For the magic of his art
Is the miracle of love.
On the sky and the welt'ring tide
And the far-receding shore
The mirage and myst'ry bide;
But the days are dark no more.

MASSAWIPPI*

I STAND upon the spruce-crowned hill
And gaze on Massawippi's wave
Once more, in thought, and feel the thrill
Of laughing waters as they lave
Far-winding shores of serpentine,
And note the terraces of green
That rise beyond, height after height,
Or in my boat, with silent flight,
Thread long, sweet avenues of light
And watch the shim'ring wavelets break
Like folds of some great spotted snake
Against the parti-colored shores
Whereon the molten sunlight pours.

What human interests round me throng,
What dreams of romance, shreds of song
Come whisp'ring with the lisp and sigh
Of waves that mirror cloud and sky,
While many a smiling face appears
I looked on there in other years!
One rare, brave soul, my thoughts recall
Who loved the sweet lake best of all,
Whose rapt enthusiasm drew
Strong inspiration from the view.

* One of the most picturesque of Canadian lakes. Its sylvan beauty appealed so strongly to the late Mrs. Mary Hartwell Catherwood that she bestowed its musical name upon the Indian girl who was one of the heroines in her "Romance of Dollard."



AFTER NOONTIDE

said, "God made its mile on mile
i glorious beauty by His smile!"
And, after, wed its Indian name,
Linked with her own, to fairest fame.

THE LATCH-STRING

FROM the wooden latch on the cabin door,
When the string hung free on the outer side,
Its meaning was "Welcome to rich or poor!"
Who should seek to enter and there abide
In the settler's bounty and cheer to share.
"Come in and find shelter," the latch-string said,
"And food, if content with our daily fare,
A seat by the fire and a pallet bed,
And a pipe to smoke, when your nag's been fed;
But offer no money for fee or fare
Or your welcome may prove an angry glare!
The latch-string is never a tavern sign;
The settler is gen'rous, but don't incline
To brook such an insult from squire or lout
When a welcome hangs with his latch-string out."

"When the string of the latch is drawn inside,
Whatever you do, for your dear life's sake,
Be ready to answer from whence you ride;
Let your voice ring clearly, make no mistake;
But with quick halloo, shout aloud your name,
Say why belated and whither you wend,

For the settler is kindly of heart, though game,
And, finding you fair, will be your friend;
Whatever he hath he will share with you;
His heart is large and his sympathies true;
He's tears for misfortune and scorn for greed,
And his hand is open to succor need.
The string of his latch is but drawn inside
Protection and safety to there provide
For his dearest ones, and his rifles stand
Well loaded and primed for his steady hand;
But come, when no lurking foe is about,
And you'll find his latch-string hanging out."

When "welcome!" hung with the string o' the latch
At the cabin's door in the early time,
Then people were friendly and quick to catch
A true heart's pulse in the jangle or chime
Of echoes discordant that tune or break
Life's tenderest chords, when the world is young
And man is bravest for woman's sake,
While words are few on the faltering tongue,
The stranger was met with a warm, true hand
When he journeyed into the wild, free land.

He proffered no coin for his fare, but brought
Fresh news from the great world's contending
thought,
And, if for the children, from legend's store,
With tales of adventure and fairy lore,
He came not a welcome in zest could match
His welcome that hung with the string o' the latch.

MOTHER OF MELODY—A FRAGMENT

FAIR Mother of Melody, daughter of silence,
With voice first endowed in the nebulous
glimmer
That rose o'er the worlds when the torch of Aurora
Flashed far through the fogs to dispel the foul
vapors
That wrapped worlds and systems in darkness and
dolor,
When, softly from chaos uprose thy glad numbers
With first whisp'ring stars of the morning celestial
Ere broke the full chorus of stellarine music
To waken the worlds, in the far spaces thronging,
To life and life's consciousness, breaking in glory.
Fair poesy owns thee, dear mother, forever,
And laughs on thy lap through the clustering ages
Or stands on thy shoulders upreaching to heaven.

O Mother of Melody, all the worlds, songless
And loveless, awaited thy measures and motions,
Inflection and cadence and monotone, voicing
The throbs and pulsations of being's beginning,
With far, faint foreseeings of future progressions
Upbuilding in splendor the dream of the morning.

Dear Mother of Melody, down through the ages
Of man and his savagery, man and his longings
For manifold mast'ry of worlds and conditions,
For thought upward soaring to seize the immortal

As prize of the mortal; to thee has he given
His soul's rarest gifts and, in raptured submission,
Has marched to thy measures through battle and
danger;

In torture of spirit, defied hell or heaven,
In worship of Janus or Moloch or Mammon,
With passion infatuate, worshipping Venus,
Or in thy clear harmonies hearing the Master,
Following the dear Nazarene by still waters
Where weary souls rest in the evergreen pastures.

Rapt Mother of Melody, silent no longer,
The multitudes come to thee, as through the spaces
The dawn first approached thee, intent but to hear
thee

And bring thee the sunlight of first recognition:
Now each comes with phormix, with harp or with
cymbal,

With horns mellow blowing, strings twanging,
lutes sighing,

Or voices keyed high to their own aspirations;
Peace, war, love, hate, passion, or mixing and
mingling

Of all to some vision of riches, power, glory,
In one mighty blare of a multi-form discord.

O Mother of Melody, vexed with our noises,
Long'st thou for the silence, or for the low voices,
Untaught of man's vanity, free from his vices
His wars and contentions, his selfish ambitions;
There still is the midnight in star-lighted pastures

Far off from the tumults of hot, fev'rish cities ;
There yet is the robin that heralds the morning
With raptures of thankfulness, greeting Aurora ;
There still is the child on the lap of its mother,
Low gurgling and cooing in innocent measures
As sweet to the ear as the rustle and murmur
Along the green ranks of the maize, or the break-
ing
Of buds when young April first calls up the blos-
soms
From winter's long slumbers; there yet are the
whispers
Of prayer to the Father of mercies uncounted
From spirits contrited and broken by sorrow
Made pure by love's precious libations as dewdrops
Englobed from the breath of sweet waters unsul-
lied.

Mother of Melody, though we do wrong to thee,
With babblings discordant thy great spirit vexing,
Yet ever to thee, on knees bended, we offer
The homage of souls thou hast won and uplifted,
And most when thy numbers voiced full adoration
To Him the All-father who wrought thee and gave
thee
The marvel euphonian of rhythmical measures,
And us the great joy of a sweet emulation
Which, through all our failures, awakens the latent
Desires of our hearts for that heavenly music
Which fails not and palls not through ages un-
ending.

CONTENT

A LIGHTER heart than mine may beat
A gladder measure than I know;
A wiser head may find the sweet,
Deep hidden in the gall of woe;

But I, who am but common clay,
Touched by each petty joy or pain,
Find all too brief life's little day
To force from grief her hidden gain,

And therefore take my joys on trust
And draw on hope for unseen things,
Or smile above the common dust
That time has wrought of clowns and kings.

One man grasps power and loses peace,
Another laughs to hide his tears;
Men follow men like sheep or geese
In quaint processions down the years,

While here or there a genius lights
The way across the barren plain,
And hero souls assail the heights
That others have assailed in vain;

But I who have not strength to scale
The frozen peaks nor wings to soar,
Must find my raptures in the vale,
In wood and field my varied store.

DISCONTENT

BUT though I hug content and make
It virtue to consort with peace,
Let me not make the old mistake
That bade each high ambition cease,

Nor frown on god-like discontent
That breaks the tyrant's cank'ring chain,
And storms each buttressed battlement
That ignorance rears in toil and pain

To guard the sanctity of kings
In greed's blood-spattered palaces,
Or dares to crush the evil things
That swarm where lust or malice is.

Ambition such as this may be
Contented with the humblest flower,
Or happy in the wild bird's glee,
December's snow or April's shower.

It's discontent is with the crude,
The base, the tyrannous, the wrong;
For love it leaps in gratitude;
For liberty it dares be strong;

And sweet to it the mountain height,
The heather and the glacial stream,
Or some low valley of delight
Where lovers stray and poets dream.

CONTENT WITH DISCONTENT

THOUGH one may smile and live, content
 With what of good or ill befall,
And hold his spirit's fire unspent
 Till roused by duty's bugle call,

No pauper soul, no ingrate mind
 Is his because he loveth peace
And cherishes and trusts his kind
 For present good and love's increase!

Divine is noble discontent!
 And yet content is sweeter far,
The holiest, purest sentiment,
 The friend of peace, the foe of war!

But, yield it all and it may lead
 To stagnant stream and sodden land,
Where no resolve matures in deed,
 Where heaven is lost and hell is banned;

Where weal nor woe may no man find;
 But languid winds with poppiéd breath
Arachnian webs of stupor wind
 That bind all things in living death.

Wherefore, content with discontent
 That wars on tyranny and wrong,
May one not take love's sacrament
 And join in peace's sacred song?

BORROWED LIGHT

THERE is not a mote in the sunshine,
Nor a planet in the sky
That doth not glow with a borrowed light,
And the grandest man on the greatest height
Shines forth, as the moth and planet shine,
With a light that passeth by,
Or falls from a world on high,
Evolved from a thought divine,
And flames upon him a golden zone—
Him cent'ring in glory men think his own.

INDIAN SUMMER VS. THE PROFESSOR

ONE learned professor, wise *sais-tout*
From out his mighty box of knowledge,
Has had a recent overflow
Of wisdom at his famous college,
And argued Indian summer off
The chart of facts, with pond'rous reason,
Made all her happy days a scoff,
And said, in terms, "there's no such season."

In vain, round the horizon's rim,
The smoke of mouldering fires arises,
In vain the ruddy sun grows dim,
When mist and haze work their surprises ;

In vain the ripe leaves patter down
To form rich carpets, red and yellow;
"Fair Indian summer's lost her crown,"
Avers this dapper college fellow.

O wise *sais-tout*, our hearts are sad;
Add no more dead weights to our crosses!
We're neither good nor very bad,
But wherefore multiply our losses?
Take what you must, but spare our dreams—
Each dear old dream and rare illusion—
When mystery-haunted woods and streams
With summer crown the fall's conclusion!

We know each tinge and fairy tint,
The fleeting thrills, the old sensations,
Each tender, melancholy hint
And all the season's indications;
We watch the mellow, dying blaze
That seeks to warm the chill newcomer,
But wherefrom comes this golden haze
If there's no good, old Indian summer?

Where now the feasts of Harvest Home,
The festivals and friendly meetings,
The welcomes given to those who roam,
The honest Indian summer greetings?
How fares it with "the hunter's moon,"
That blushed above the hunt's confusion,
Since learning, in time's afternoon,
Declares her reign a cheap illusion?

No more the stag shall flee, at morn,
 Before the bowman's sly approaches;
No more the driver wind his horn,
 Nor speed, through golden dust, his coaches;
No more shall come the cavalcade
 When Indian summer weddings flourish,
Since this learned pedagogue has made
 Such debris of the dreams we cherish.

Professor—let me speak it low—
 It seems to me, with all your graces,
You know too much that isn't so
 And bank too much on commonplaces.
The Indian summer's more than dream;
 Your logic wrongs both fact and reason;
Go walk by field and wood and stream
 And learn, for once, there's such a season!

Fragrance of spice, pawpaws and mints
 Await your doubting, blunted senses;
Through many a maze of varied tints
 The wahoo flames by crooked fences,
The turkeys gobble, guineas clack
 And boys go whistling lover's ditties,
While farmer lads come trooping back
 From books or desks in tiresome cities.

You might as well come say to these,
 "Henceforth there'll be no Indian summer!"
As overturn a hive of bees
 And hope to dodge each angry hummer!

In practice, either enterprise
Might peril much your beauty's blossom,
And 'twould be far more worldly wise
To play the season's silent 'possum.

Old Indian summer, dreamy, rare,
With nuts and golden pippins mellow,
Is just about as fair and square
A deal as e'er was dealt a fellow;
And you, dear Doctor Know-it-all,
Go to, with all your fierce negation!
Old Indian summer's got the call
On muscle, mind and inclination.

Her reign, it may be short or long,
But she's a queen to all conditions;
Unto her shrine the people throng,
Enjoy her raptures and provisions;
The hunter's priestess, farmer's friend;
To praise her every one has reason,
And he was born to some bad end
Who scowls and storms, "there's no such sea-
son!"

AT BELLE AIR

I WANDERED down the winding road
By the old place at Belle Air,
Where youth and innocence abode
And hearts were light as air;

Where the sun rose up and the sun went down,
And the days were fair and sweet,
In the summer's green or the autumn's brown,
Or the winter's storm and sleet;
For that was in the old, old time,—
The old time, long ago,
When the pulses beat to the happy rhyme
Of a song we used to know,—
A wordless song that seemed to float
From the stellar worlds above
And sing, through its ev'ry silver note,
Of love, love, love.

I walked again the old road-way,—
By the place of tombstones white
That stand where children used to play,—
And it palsied me with fright
To see their names on the pitiless stones
And read of their sleep below
With dead men's dust and decaying bones,—
The children that loved me so!—
O death is strong; but love lives long,
And death himself shall die,
And the old, old song of the childish throng
Be sung in the bye and bye
When death lies cold in barren mold
That naught into life may move,
While seraphs tune their harps of gold
To love, love, love.

The year grows old and on his hair
Are the signs of coming snows,
Yet blossoms linger here and there—
Belated pink and rose;—
But over the woodland path no more
Do the children come and go,
For the school is gone with its dreams of lore
And the light in the west is low;
So I see but the headstones, ghastly white,
Where the loved and lost repose,
And the little church that athwart the light
Its quiet shadow throws :
O shadow, shadow of faith or creed
That lieth the graves above,
The children's song tells greater need
Of love, love, love !

A SYLVAN LAOCOÖN

I

A BRAVE young oak was my Laocoon,
His head upraised to those imperial heights
Where the great tulip tree its creamy flowers
Unfolds. His trunk, though lithe, was strong and
straight,
His branches sinewed like an athlete's limbs;
His leaves were glossy-green till autumn days
Of mellow sunshine, following frosty nights,
Matured them into gold and crimson, tinged
By darker shades, whereon the sombre browns
Encroached each day until the ribald winds
Stripped off his finery, leaving rags alone,—
Brown rags of leaves,—to cling and flutter on
And dance with winter's ruffian storms, when all
Their fair companions slumbered in the mold.

Deep in the soil and reaching freely forth
For food and drink,—the sap that circulates
To bole and branch and farthest cloister'd bud,—
My young oak sent his burrowing roots to hold
His swelling trunk and coronet of leaves
And freights of acorns upright, staunch and sure
As doth the sailor's tarred and knotted ropes
Sustain the ship's masts when the welt'ring seas
Are lashed to fury by stampeding winds.

And my Laocoon, though proud and strong,
Was generous to all the weaker world
Of shrub and flower and conscious, moving things,

The birds sang in his top and he was glad;
The squirrels munched his acorns and he smiled;
The red deer sought his shadow and he shook
His greenery with flutterings of delight,
And when brown Bruin rubbed his hirsute back
Against his roughened bark, he laughed outright
And tossed his great arms to the nocturne breeze.

Frail hair-ferns nestled in the shelt'ring clefts
Made by the great roots parting from his bole
And spreading outward like the tentacles
Of octopi that sein the swarming seas;
And scores of wild herbs, such as love the shade,
And shrink from open field and garden close,
Shared his large bounty and rejoiced to feast
Their starry eyes upon his majesty.

Such things he cherished; but the mob of trees
Which crowded on him found him overlord
And strenuous master of his own domain;
And many an eager rival pined and died
For want of foods his harvesters secured,
Or, when the July sun—a Vulcan's forge—
Went flaming through the brazen afternoons,
Perished of thirst while my Laocoon
Was well supplied by his far-reaching roots
That sucked up moisture through their spongioles—

Ten thousand little sponges, open-mouthed,
To serve their lord and keep his arteries full;—
Meanwhile the wee things clust'ring at his base
Lived out their little lives, matured their seeds,
And wrought their purpose in his gracious shade.

II

How chanced it so I know not; but there came
A wandering minstrel from a neighboring town,
Who loved the woods and magnified the oak,
Yet thought of woods and oak as servitors
Of man and his ambitions, nothing more.
While resting in Laocoon's shade he sang
A song for him wherein he boasted much
Of man and his achievements in the earth,
And praised the oak, his ally and his friend,
In measured words of little pith, whereto
My brave oak, through his myriad murm'ring
leaves
Responded softly with a song of oaks,—
A lay, the untaught minstrel later wrought
Into a cruder language of his own:

SONG OF THE OAK

I'm an oak! and I feel in my sap the commotion
Of old seismic change, as when mountains arose
And continents sank in the depths of the ocean,
While the volcanoes flamed in their red over-
flows.


I came from a race that is older than history,—
A race that sprang forth when the primeval dark
Was chased by the sun from the infant world's
mystery,
Ere Noah went voyaging about in the ark.

I'm an oak! and the oaks knew the monsters gi-
gantic
When great Irish elks and huge mastodons grew:
They were helpers of men in that period romantic
When Jason went oaring his Argo canoe.

They dwelt with strange gods beyond Israel or
Edom,
And Egypt and Isis were younger than they
Were when Moses was leading the tribes out to
freedom,
Or Confucius taught wisdom to ancient Cathay.

I'm an oak! in my bole is the strength of a giant,—
Of Samson, or Theseus, or great Hercules.
The oaks were crowned kings ere the cyclops de-
fiant,
Or centaurs had ravished the lands by the seas,

And I smile when I think that in far dreamy ages
Old Philemon, perchance, may have started my
line
Of the family glorious, as told in the pages
Of myth books and pantheons and legends divine.



I'm an oak! and old minstrels and poets come singing

Among my green leaves when the zephyrs are free:

From Homer to Burns their sweet numbers are ringing

Through centuries of whispering oak leaves to me.

The Druids of old wrought their wild divinations

In dark oaken bowers, and, I feel in my veins

The rhythmical pulse of their weird incantations

That moaned like the desolate winds of the plains.

I'm an oak! and my ancestors grew by the ocean,

Gave their strength to old galleys and great ships that sailed,

And felt in their sap the salt waves' every motion,

When summer skies smiled, or the storm winds prevailed;

And my strength is as theirs, under new world conditions,

It shouts in my branches, makes val'rous my soul,

Inspires me and thrills me until the old visions

Of conquest and glory in dreams o'er me roll.

I'm an oak! and the oaks love the wilderness voices,

The mad shouts of the storm in the forest, the roar

Of fire in the pines, or when April rejoices
The low laugh of glad waters that ripple and
pour.

We're kings of the wildwood, we reign o'er the
fountain
Where oak leaves lie thick on the life-giving
wave;
We tower in our pride at the foot of the mountain,
Or we trail our gray moss o'er the wanderer's
grave.

I'm an oak! and the oak tree is gentle and tender
To every frail creature that bows at his feet,
And justice or service to man I would render
Yield my limbs to hang rogues on, give mercy a
seat.

I have shelter and food for the Lord's own anointed
Be they insects, or mortals, or gods overthrown;
But I stand for my rights, as my author appointed,
And flourish or fall in defense of my own.

The village minstrel listened, much confused,
And when the oak had finished, murmur'd low
"The tree outboasts me! Being but a tree;
I did not think a tree could feel so much,
Nor know so many things that mortals feel;"
Then bowed his head and wander'd musing on
Intent to think the boastful ballad out
And sing it in his rude vernacular.

III

One soft spring day, up-peeping through the mold
Among the wind flowers at the young oak's feet,
There came a strange plant-baby to unfold
Its tender buds, beseeching warmth and light
And whisp'ring faintly as such new-born things
May lisp and whisper with their protean tongues:
"I am a vine-child longing for the heights
Where first the morning sunlight strikes the wood,
For the clear air, the free and open sky,
Concave and gemmed with palpitating stars;
But being a vine I cannot stand alone
Like yonder poplar, or this strong, young oak
That shelters my frail life; nor can I be
More than a sprawling, mildewed, helpless thing,
Encumb'ring earth and lost to my divine
Inheritances in the upper world,
Unless you lend me of your strength, great oak,
And take me by the hands that I may mount
Along your mighty bole and decorate
Your lofty crown with twining spray and flower;
For I shall bear such fruitage as may make
Your grand tiara richer than a god's,
And render yonder lordly tulip tree
Plain and old-fashioned, by comparison;
And yet I shall be but an humble vine,
Too weak to injure, too proud to forsake,
And all my growing glory may be yours;
But I may see the sky, the sun, the stars,
Breathe the high air and serve you, and, therein
Attain my heritage as my reward.

And my Laocoon looked down, well pleased
And deeply touched by all the vine had said,
Charmed by her graceful form and flatt'ring speech,
And more than won by her sweet promises,
Till all his treehood into rapture ran,
And murmuring, through his unsheathing buds,
As zephyr's voice his sylvan welcome rose
In answer to the vine and floated out
Athwart the forest, upward toward the sky,
Or lisped its burden till the birds and bees
And clustering green'ry quenched their noise to
hear.

The words were wedded to a woodsy air
Such as none but the forest minstrels know.

SONG OF WELCOME

Little vine, frail, fairy vine,
May my rugged strength be thine!
To my rough bark cleave and cling,
Round my lithe arms twine and spring
High and higher from mold and clod,
Till a high arboreal god
I shall stand enwreathed by thee
Through a green eternity!

Little vine, confiding vine,
'Round my strength thy beauty twine!
I will lift thee to thy place,
Thou my coronet shall grace!

I, a king, grow straight and strong;
Thou art nature's sylvan song,
And thy living rhyme shall be
All I'll crave from poesy.

Little vine, aspiring vine,
Never more in grief repine!
There is vigor in my arms
To protect from all that harms;
There is firmness in my bole
To uphold my aureole,
Which my pretty vine shall be,
Crown of my divinity!

The infant vine assumed a lovelorn air,
Leaned her wee head, in hood of velvet green;
Toward the young oak outstretched a tiny hand
And her response to sylvan music sang:

THE RESPONSE

I shall not grow weary ascending
As the days and the years wander by!
A grateful heart's love is unending,
And a faithful heart's hope cannot die.

From thy loftiest spray trailing over,
When my long upward-reaching shall end,
I'll whisper my love to my lover,—
My lover, my liege lord and friend,—

I'll smile through green leaf and brown berry
And rejoice in the rain or the sun,
And dance with the wind and be merry
For the joy of the quest I have won.

So I lose myself once and forever,
To find all my glory in thine,
And nothing from thee shall dis sever
The close-clinging love of thy vine.

And my young oak was happy with his vine,
Rejoiced to see her pretty leaves unfold,
Spring after spring, her slender stem arise
And her soft tentacles reach out and up
And grasp his bark or some down-drooping spray,
Twine gently round and harden in their hold
Till winter's storms might sooner rend his limbs
Than break one clasp of his ascending vine
Wherewith she clung to him and mounted up
To her high destiny anear the clouds.

IV

If those quick changes into living wires
Of grasping fingers, which at first were soft
And gentle as an infant's playful touch,
Disturbed the oak he gave no outward sign;
But vine and oak were one in the new joy
Of their uniquely strange companionship.
And when the vine attained to his great crown

Of spreading boughs and leaped from limb to limb,
And over-ran them, flaunting glossy leaves
From every verdant branch, festooning each
With curious, pendant flowers, or when the frosts
Autumnal touched the softer greens and turned
Them into flame, hung there her clustering fruit,
In brown and purple globes, rare jewels for
His lofty diadem, his joy was full
And to the sun his soul o'erflowed in prayer:

“Father of light
And yielder of good,
Who shall affright,
When thou in thy might,
Dispenseth a flood
Of love and delight!

“Father benign!
Hear thou my prayer;
To my beautiful vine
Give tenderest care!
As she seeketh divine
Light high in the air,
Give tenderest care!”

And now there came a hundred forms of life
To him, for shelter, where one came before.
His arbored top was populous with wings;
Birds sang and insects hummed for him all day,
And meek-eyed creatures found his matted bower
A safe asylum from the huntsman's gun.

The oriole swung her hammock where the vine
Spanned some clear space, and hung vibrating there,
While her companion of the golden breast
Sang out his soul to cheer her brooding days.
The squirrel mother, built her nest of leaves,
Where interlacing vines and twigs converged,
And reared her frisky young, the robin came
To sing his raptured welcome to the dawn
From highest spray, or speed the parting day
When paradise went smiling down the west.

There noisy blackbirds clung on April morns
And shouted wildly to the unfolding buds,
Or some lone eagle folded weary wings
And in a silence, ominous, surveyed
The varied scene; and many small birds came
With warblings sweetly clear and musical
As ever charmed the soul of tree or vine,
Or fell upon the duller ears of man.

And my Laocoon forgot his fears,—
If fears he'd cherished,—and rejoicing bore
His twining, clinging vine on willing arms;
Glad in his strength, to bear the burden up;
Rejoiced with all the thronging visitors
Through summer days, and, in the winter's gloom,
Sang martial airs with wand'ring warrior winds.

At length the vine outreached his highest leaf
And hung her banners out in triumph there
To catch the breeze in that unshadowed light,

The highest and most graceful plume the oak,
Her humble servant, now bore in his crown,
Through sun or starshine.

She had won her place,—
The goal for which her young ambition yearned.
Thence looking up she felt the ardent sun
Smile on her leaf and thrill her mounting sap,
And for a day's space she was satisfied
And whispered softly to the zephyr's kiss,
A pean to victory such as mortals raise,
Who, helped to power by stronger, better men,
Are swollen with pride and arrogate the fame,
The guerdons and the glory to themselves:

SONG

I was lowest of the lowly,
Child of the earthly mold,
Yet have arisen slowly,
Pinched by the wintry cold,
Beaten by winds that whistle
Near to the old brown earth,
Neighbor to wort and thistle,
Was I, e'en from my birth.

Fearless of storms, ascending
Day by day I grew;
Upward with strain unending
Did I my way pursue,

Till now, in the air of morning,
I flaunt my leaves on high,
With flower and fruit adorning
The arch of the sober sky.

Sister of star and sunbeam,
Mistress of wood and field,
In joy of hope and day dream,
Great is the power I wield;
I shall mount higher, higher,
And reach up to the sun;
In the warmth of his kindly fire
Shall my quest and crown be won.

How puny the oak tree seemeth,
Claiming me as his crown,
When glory round me beameth
And jealous worlds look down!
I have yielded enough of graces
To earthly mold and tree,—
Since now the loftiest place is,
By naught, too high for me.

V

Deem not the vine a cruel ingrate, thus
To make the oak her victim in return
For his large bounty, that had said: "Arise,
Upon my strength and glorify the world
Of sylvan gladness with thy trailing grace:"

She was not loveless and ingratitude
Had little part in her ambitious schemes,
Her thought and speech were born of hard, cold
facts
Of structure, impulse and environment,
That work out destiny for tree and vine
As well as history for men and states.

She, having caught the oak in her embrace,
Might not release him though she felt the clasp
Of her contracting coils, her smothering leaves
Securely dominating trunk and branch
And overmastering his vitality.

What her soul felt for him man may not know,
Since vegetation speaks through leaf and flower,
Fruit, color, tint and fragrance, or the grace,
Of combinations such as we perceive,
On blooming prairies, fields of waving grain,
Or where wild buttercups and daisies meet.
We feel the subtle force, infinite stress
Of this plant language, but discover not
Its finer meanings, nor interpret such
As we may blindly guess, in human speech;

But once my village bard, in waking dream,
Passed through a garden breaking into bloom
And heard its genii chant a curious song,—
An artless medley in the warp of which
They wove the clumsy language wherewith men
Have sought to voice the speech of color, tint,

And varied form in blossom, bud and leaf
And so translate them to the yearning soul.
And after searching many "Floral Guides"
And sundry ornate "Languages of Flowers"
Rich in quotations from bucolic bards,
My village laureate thus translated parts
Of many things the prattling genii sang:

THE DREAM BUD

When the Dream Bud breaks and the blossom
blows,
There's nobody tells you, for nobody knows
What the mad soul does, where the glad soul goes
When the Dream Bud breaks and the blossom
blows.

When the Dream Bud bursts and the red flower
waves,
Then the love born in heaven, is the love that saves,
In the wild rush of feeling that the heart enslaves,
When the soul is on fire and the red flower waves.

When the Dream Bud opes and the white flower
blooms,
There are quaint marvels woven in the dream god's
looms,
From the soft sunlight sifted through the trailing
plumes
Of the red-wanded willows when the white flower
blooms.

When the Dream Bud yields and the blue flower
springs,
Then truth is the homage that false heart brings,
And love is the idyl that the scorner sings
When faith is an anchor and the blue flower
springs.

When the Dream Bud blows and the mixed flower
shows,
How the sick soul tosses, how the mad world goes;
How the loud laughter lapses, how the hot tear
flows,
Through the heights and the depths when the
mixed flower shows!

When the Dream Bud parts for the passion flower,
There is woe in the trail of the flying hour,
And a storm of sorrow is the midnight's dower
When the wild winds wail for the passion flower.

When the Dream Bud spreads and the lilac springs,
One maiden, only one, has the hidden wings,
And the first lover loved is a king of kings,
When the brown thrush warbles and the lilac
springs.

When the Dream Bud blooms in a cup of flame,
Then the trumpet flower is the trump of fame,
And the wide world trembles at the awesome name
Of the dream-drunken sleeper with his cup of flame.

When the Dream Bud dies and the blossoms fail,
Then never does a bark on the dream sea sail,
And no knight ever rides for the holy grail,
When the toadstools cluster and the blossoms fail.

When the Dream Bud breaks and the blossom
blows,
There's nobody tells you, for nobody knows,
What the mad soul does, where the glad soul goes
When the Dream Bud breaks and the blossom
blows.

VI

A day's contentment for the victor vine,
Joy of achievement, promise of repose,
And then the world-old story! All content
With world conditions being ever child
Of discontent's fair daughter, hope, first born
Of minist'ring divinities, save love.

When her brief heyday with content had passed,
And still the aspiring force urged on and on
And up and up, when she no more could rise,—
Since neither beam of sun nor star might lift
Her helpless weight on high in that clear air;—
And by the strong, resistless force compelled
To live by growth, or of stagnation die,
She vainly sought to overleap the space
That opened blue between the oak's high crown
And any neighboring tree that beckoned her.

Outworn by failure, sorrowing, perhaps,
Because she'd found no ladder to the stars,
She turned about (it was her destiny)
Caught twig, then branch, once more, and circled
round

Her benefactor's head, ran here and there,
And knit and tangled all his leafy crown
In closely clinging nets of living wire,
As some great spider knits the wayside weeds
Together with his countless silv'ry threads
And smothers them in shrouds of gossamer.

And my young oak! ill fared it then with him!
His burden grew upon him day by day;
First he grew weary, next, he felt the force
Of hugging coil and grasping tentacle;
His joys decreased and sorrows multiplied,
His blighted acorns prematurely fell,
And then the vine grew hateful to his soul.

At length he raged for freedom and invoked
The aid of savage winds and swelled his bole,
And, with the roaring storm, his great arms lashed,
In phrensy screamed, and shook from root to crown
Till all the forest trembled and great boughs
Were torn from the surrounding trees, and he
Was scarred and maimed by many an ugly wound;
And yet the vine clung and her python coils
Crushed through his bark and choked his mighty
limbs,
And all his strength was powerless to shake off

The hateful thing that bound him as with thongs
Of wire annealed, that might not yield nor break.

Meanwhile the vine's roots, permeating all
The oak's domain of soil, robbed him of food
And drink; her leaves consumed the vital breath
That heaven, before, had yielded unto him,
Till my strong conqu'ror, who defied the mob
Of crowding trees and sent them down to death,
In turn, was disinherited and made
Untimely victim of a sure decline.

One mighty limb, whose branches upward rose,
Above all others, felt the python clasp
And multiplying burden of the vine
So weighing on it, choking back its sap
And shutting off the sunlight from its leaves,
That like a prisoner in a dungeon chained,
It pined and sickened, till its upper half,—
The half that was the monarch's crown and pride,—
Died utterly; its leaves and light sprays fell,
And where the glory rose, some sapless prongs
Alone remained, from which the bark fell off;
The flaunting vine slipped down a little way
And, bare and white, the lifeless stumps arose
Like splintered antlers of some titan elk;
Wherefrom the sentinel crow surveyed the scene
To spy out danger for his clam'rous brood;
The great woodpecker, he the *pec-bois-grand*,
The *pileate*, who shuns our naked fields
Repeated there his quaintly ringing cry
Or on their white crusts beat his loud tattoo.

A cruel wound, received in that first strife,
Became a cankering sore and eat its way
Into his trunk, with rust and rot until
The worms and insects, multiplying, wrought
A cavern in his citadel of strength
Wherein the raccoon reared her saucy young.

But my Laocoon gave little heed
To bird or beast; his broken spirit failed,
And he grew sadder, weaker day by day;
Yet often, summoning his failing strength,
Cried to the storm wind: "Let us rend again!"
And battled vainly to unleash himself.

Thus sorrow followed sorrow and his soul
Knew all that tree may know of worldly woe,
And all the stings wherewith ingratitude
Afflicts the life of any sylvan thing
Were felt by him until the stormy end
Came in the tumult of the battle's rage.

'Twas near the close of one unhappy day
When all his being into protest ran,
And protest into wildest fury grew:
The southwest wind came fiercely howling on:
The oak cried to him: "Now you give me joy!
I hold my arms up in their cruel bonds,
And pray you blow upon them, blow your worst,
And let me lend my strength that we may shake
The hateful vine away, or I may break,
And, breaking, end my woes, and happily,
If this relentless vine may die with me."

Then the wind caught his mighty top and blew
The clust'ring vines out like a bellying sail;
But they clung fast and all the oak top roared
And shook and bowed before the dreadful blast
For one brief moment, then with loud report
The great trunk broke and branching limb and vine
Were swept off by the furious gale and borne,
Lightly as zephyrs bear the children's kites,
So far away, beyond the great oak's stump—
Left standing there alone in death—the vine
Was torn from her strong moorings in the soil
And vine and limb and leafy spray were blent
In one rude sylvan tragedy, and there
Was silence after for the wind had passed.

The sun flamed through the opening in the bower
On fallen branch and vine and withered them.
The startled birds and animals, bereft
Of home and shelter, fled the mournful scene;
But sweet peace came and spread her noiseless
wing
Above the ruin, and green strangers grew
Beneath the wreckage; but the wood was changed,
And never more to be as it had been.

Next morn my village bard came, saw and wept;
But when the sun rose smiling, dried his tears
And in low improvisation sang:

The proud head has fallen,
The glory is over,
The life-story ended,
The loved and the lover,
In one ruin blended,
Lie hopelessly fallen,
The drama is over!

The anguish is over,
And dead the ambitions
That led to the sorrow!
Here's peace to old visions!
We'll sigh not tomorrow
For dreams that are over,
Nor fallen ambitions.

POSTSCRIPT

When years had passed the rhymer came again
To walk alone, not lonely, through the wood
And note the changes time had wrought therein.
Lured by the bluebird's call, the sparrow's lay
He sought the warblers where the great oak's top
With its encumbering vine lay mold'ring low.
The birds flew on into the denser shades;
But there he found the ginseng's pretty leaf;
Nearby the trillium showed its purple bloom
And, frankly bold, "Jack-in-the-pulpit" held
His long-lipped pitcher upward to the light,
And to the visitor's inquiring gaze,
In his sharp tongue, up-speaking, thus replied:

"Seek not a moral here, for there is none!
We greenly growing things may hist'ry make
In our short day of changing shade and sun;
But spin no morals e'en for virtue's sake.

"What happens here, where each with each must
strive
Is but old nature's way of settling things,
And only the best fitted may survive,
Be they weak plants or forest lords and kings.

But which is fittest, we may never know,
Sometimes the oak survives, sometimes the vine,
Both fail at others, and to ruin go,
That from their mold we weaker things may
twine,

Or lift our heads up, on our slender stalks,
That each may have his day, sometime, some-
where.
What learnest thou from all thy woodland walks,
Exceeding this, of victory, hope, despair?

"But art!" you cry; I nothing know of art;
I teach but hist'ry, in my humble way;
Its facts are facts; each actor has his part
In life or death; each has his little day.

Blame not the rampant vine, blame not the oak,
The briar, the thorn, the thistle or the weed;
Each works the will of Him whose mandate spoke
It into life, be it of grace or greed.

"Of man I speak not; art he hath, and mind
Beyond the great earth's rim to take his way,
And he may morals in a brush heap find;
I only know each creature hath his day,

His little span of sunshine, starshine, shade,
His later silhouettes of deeper grief,—
When springs arrive or cruel frosts invade—
If bud or blossom, ripened fruit or leaf."

"But I would fain think," cried the wand'ring bard,
"The ruined oak and vine are fitting types
Of man and woman, when ill-mated, each
Led by some force more dominant than love
To tower, or climb and fill his little world
With individual glory and renown."

"I told you, I of mortals naught might say,"—
Retorted then the fiery pulpiteer,—
"But this I'll venture now, if so I may
With naught from my temerity to fear:

Your borrowed moral's, but a dotard's croak,
Some old rake's scandal, mumbled o'er his wine,
Since man is not and never was an oak,
And, truce to fable, woman's not a vine."

The poet, turning on his ready heel,
Without an uttered protest, walked away,
But whispered humbly to his manuscript:

"Go forth my little scroll and tell thy tale,
If any care to heed it; though it fail
Of such sensations as a tale must yield
To touch the pulse of thousands, it may wield
A gentler influence o'er the calmer few,
At once, more lasting, more serenely true
Than might prevail through greater art or be
Wedded to fame through mortal chivalry;
For morals are not wanting in its play
Of sylvan story, either grave or gay:
With heart to feel and open eyes to see,
He who may read this woodland tragedy
May find its morals sure without the aid
Of chart or index, and, be unafraid
Of criticism, such as just expressed;
Jack-in-the-pulpit's but a weed at best!"

